HOW

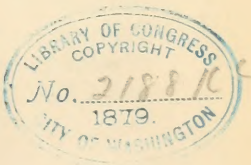
WE SAVED THE OLD FARM,

AND

HOW IT BECAME A NEW FARM.

BY

"A YOUNG FARMER."



LORING, Publisher,
Corner of Bromfield and Washington Sts.
BOSTON.

PRESS OF
ROCKWELL & CHURCHILL.
39 Arch Street, Boston.

HOW WE SAVED

THE OLD FARM.

CHAPTER I.

"Now, Helen," said my uncle, as he leaned back in the great rocking-chair, and carelessly jingled the ponderous seal upon his massive gold chain with his left hand, "I have been thinking this matter over ever since I heard of poor William's death, and I have made up my mind just what is the best thing for you to do. You might sell the wood off, and sell the stock and tools, and in that way pay the mortgage; and then you could live a few years by selling the hay, with what these boys could earn, but the farm would be growing poorer and would not sell for so much as it would sell for now, and my advice would be to make a clean sale of everything now, and pay off the debts, and get a little place in Blackington, where the boys could go to work in the factory; and upon what they earned, and upon what you would have, you could live quite comfortable. And if you felt able to take a few boarders, with Alice to help you, you might make a good thing in that way, I dare say."

And Uncle Robert, who was a prosperous merchant in the distant city of Woodville, and an influential man there, looked as if the business was all settled to his satisfaction, and nothing more remained but to carry out his plans. I,

the before-mentioned Alice, a girl of thirteen, who had a keen dread of leaving our old home, which I loved so dearly, but with too much awe of my energetic, loud-talking uncle and his gold seal, which I had always looked upon as if it were a badge of authority, to venture any remonstrance, glanced anxiously at the other members of our family circle to see how they received it. Mother, in her newly put on widow's weeds, looked as if the very thought was an additional distress to her, and yet as if she knew not which way to turn or what to do. She had always been used to having my father decide upon all matters of business, and although, like most New England farmers' wives, she had always been ready to "have her say" upon all matters, yet she would have been astonished if she had thought that anything depended entirely upon her will, and would not have known what her will really was. I could see that she did not want to leave the old farm, but I knew any real opposition to the plan must come from some one else who could offer a better plan.

Ned, my playmate, my brother, scarcely a year older than myself, was already exclaiming against going into the factory village; but it was to Clarence, a boy of sixteen, one of those rare ones who seldom spoke until he had well considered what he had to say, and who usually ended by having things his own way, because he felt sure that way was right, and he never gave up although he made no violent opposition to other people, it was to him that I looked next as the one who would decide the question. He said nothing, but the contraction of his brow, and the lips which were firmly closed, as was his habit when he was thinking intently, gave me an indefinite sort of encouragement that he had some other plan, which he would bring forward when he had fully considered it.

"I don't know what is best," at last answered my mother, sighing heavily, "and I have no doubt you are right; but I do not like the idea of giving up the old place, where I have

lived with William for eighteen years, and where the children were born, and which has been in the family so long; I must have time to think it over and to make up my mind to it, if it must be."

I could see Clarence's face light up, as if the time to think it over was just what he wanted, but my uncle impatiently exclaimed: —

"What is the use of thinking it over? Can't you see that it is just what must be, if you think it over for a year? And the longer you wait, the worse for you. Now I am here, I can give you my advice about what to do and how to do it, and I might see some one in Blackington to-morrow, as I go back, who would look out for a place for you there by stopping over a train, though I ought to get back to Woodville as quickly as possible. But I cannot very well come down again this winter it is so far and such a cold ride, and I must be very busy now looking out for the spring trade, which I hope will be better than it has been for a year past. If it is not I cannot tell how I may come out, for it is a hard time for me to get money to meet my bills."

I was ungenerous enough to look upon that as a hint which was calculated to put a stop beforehand to any appeals to him for aid, but I may have been wrong. It was the hard winter of 1857, when many business men felt as despondent as Uncle Robert. At any rate it was not needed, for my mother would not have thought of making such application even to him, her only brother, unless we had been suffering for the necessaries of life.

"Well," said my mother, "I cannot decide it to-night. I am too tired to think now, and I must think of it and talk it over with the children, and perhaps with Mr. Grey, before I do anything."

"Much these children know about such things, and a farmer who never was out of the county will not know much more, I suppose: but you can have your own way," said

Uncle Robert, indignantly, and in a tone that said as plainly as words that we should get no more advice from him unless we asked for it. And then the conversation drifted upon indifferent subjects, while Ned pouted, with the tears occasionly starting from his eyes as he thought of leaving our dearly loved home. And I, instead of going to him for sympathy as I would have done if we had been in trouble of a more trivial nature, crept close to Clarence and put my hand in his, feeling as if I relied upon his stronger will for strength to resist against being further bereaved.

We had that day followed to the tomb the mortal remains of our father, who had been taken from us suddenly. Only a few days before he had left us well and strong as usual, and gone to the Corners with a load of wood, and before night the minister of our little church had come in and gently broken to us the news that he had been found dead upon the road, having apparently fallen beneath the wheels of the wagon in such a way that the wheels had passed over his neck and broken it instantly. What caused the fall none knew.

Our father had been taken from us, and now to try to take away our home and put us down in Blackington, a village where I had been a few times with my father, as it was only eight miles from us, where I seemed to see my brothers growing to look like the boys I had seen coming to and going from the factory; with faces black as they came from work or pale and peaked after they had washed the black off; with pipes in their mouths, or still worse, with tobacco juice staining clothing, uttering oaths and coarse jokes, regardless of those who were in hearing; even a vision of mysef, like a girl of about my own age that I had once seen there, quarreling and actually swearing at some one who might perhaps have been her mother, who was calling her to come home. No, no, it was too dreadful. I think if I had been offered a choice to go there or go to the poor-house, where good-hearted,

though rough, Uncle Tom Hardy ruled over and cared for the half-dozen aged and infirm, and poor crippled Sally Jones and her two quiet children, I should have hailed the poor-house with joy. I knew it well, and it was not so awful; — but Blackington seemed full of unknown dangers.

And now let me tell you something of ourselves, that you may know into what society you have been so unceremoniously introduced. My grandfather, on my father's side, was descended from one of the early settlers of Brookfield, where we resided. It was a quiet country place, a half-dozen miles from any railroad. No village had been formed in Brookfield, or nearer than Blackington, eight miles away, though at Brookfield Four Corners, some two miles from us, was the blacksmith shop, the old stage tavern, and the grocery, which was also the post-office. At the tavern was also a public hall, where an occasional lecture, dance, or show of some sort sometimes appeared to break the monotony of our quiet existence. Elsewhere through the town the houses were scattered at irregular intervals along the road, mostly standing a little back from the road, with old orchards around them, and barns near by where cows lowed and pigs grunted or squealed at feeding time. The people within a mile either way were neighbors, and the farmers borrowed and loaned tools and carriages and teams, and exchanged spare-ribs of pork and legs of beef at killing time, and changed works in planting or hoeing or haying time, without often figuring up to see just how the account stood until death took one of the parties and so balanced the account. And the farmers' wives and mothers tripped back and forward, with shawls or aprons over their heads, in the twilight to gossip, and compare calico, and borrow drawings of tea and cups of sugar or molasses of one another, to be conscientiously repaid when their husbands should get time to go to the Corners again.

Here my grandfather — Thomas Reynolds — had owned a large tract of land, from which he had given my Uncle

Thomas, his oldest son, the land which was now his farm upon which he lived, just north of ours. For the next son, Uncle James, he had sold some outlying lots and some of the cattle and raised five hundred dollars, which James had taken as his portion and departed for the West. He had first settled in Western New York, then moved to Ohio, and, when last heard from, had sold out there and was going to the newly discovered land of gold — to California. No tidings had come for many years, and we had long thought of him among those who had perished upon the plains in the endeavor to reach the gold regions, or had succumbed to the hardships of the mines.

Aunt Matilda, the only daughter, had married James Grey, the son of old Squire Grey of the neighboring town, who was now a squire himself, and a well-to-do farmer, with better barns and better fields than any in Brookfield, and good stock of improved breeds and patent tools of all sorts, which he was perpetually praising as being so superior to those possessed by his humble neighbors that they "would pay their cost in one year, sir," as he confidently asserted. However, as he kept no strict account of profit or loss, and had interest and rent coming in, people received his praises of improved farming with a little mental reservation, and said "it was all very well for the squire to do so, but poor farmers must go more carefully, and make less if it must be less." And while the squire, as became a man of property, was a man of great influence in town matters, and esteemed as shrewd in advising other people in matters of business not connected with farming, yet he could not persuade the farmers to mount any one of his hobbies. He was generous and liberal to a fault toward all with whom he came in contact if business was not attempted, but he was sharp in trade and a most exacting creditor. It was to pay off the marriage portion of five hundred dollars, which my grandfather had promised Aunt Matilda, that father had placed that mortgage upon the farm;

borrowing the money of the squire to pay his wife, when grandfather gave him the deed of the old homestead. When father had brought home to the old house the pretty Helen Talbot, the school-teacher in our district one term, and presented her to his father as his wife, then grandfather resigned control of the farm and gave my father the deed of it, upon condition of a support while he lived, and the payment of the before-mentioned sum to Aunt Matilda when he died. And here father had lived and managed the farm very much, I fancy, as his father had done before him, saving not much while the children were small, especially while grandfather lived, and then at his death came the mortgage, of which the squire had rigorously demanded the interest every year; and if father had any money left one year, after paying interest and taxes, the next year he perhaps had to sell a cow or a hog to square up. And so, at his death, we had the farm, the stock and tools, and the mortgage as our inheritance.

The winter before the one on which my story opens, father and Clarence had cut the wood off the north lot, and had sold it to a man at the Corners, and it was nearly the last load which father had carried upon that last day of his life, so that we felt sure of having money enough there to pay all funeral expenses and live upon for a short time, for our wants were not many. We had beef and pork in the cellar, and potatoes and pumpkins, and in the crib there was a good supply of corn and rye, and hay and corn-stover in the barn for the cattle, and the cows would give us plenty of milk and butter, and the sale of butter and eggs would supply us with groceries, for a while at least. So, when in the morning Uncle Robert, as he hurried to get away for the morning stage from the Corners, ventured to repeat a little of the advice which he had urged so persistently the night before, my mother could afford to reply: "No need of hurrying about it, Robert, we can stay here awhile longer yet, I trust, and we may see a better way yet."

And when he had gone, mother and I went about our work of clearing up and putting away, and our domestic duties, stopping, now and then, for a quiet cry together, as some article came to hand which too strongly brought to mind the great loss we had met. And the boys went to the barn and the woodpile, where we could see from the window that they were in earnest conversation about something much of the time, Clarence doing the most of the talking, I thought, which was contrary to the usual custom when they were together. I say we could see, but I doubt if my mother noticed it; but I did, and wondered what it meant. At noon and at supper I looked for something from Clarence upon the question of going to Blackington, but he was about as usual, only, as I thought, a shade more quiet. He seemed to have a load of care upon his mind which was not there before, while Ned, though quiet, seemed to have become more manly all at once. It was not until evening came again, and we had gathered once more in the little sitting-room, with mother knitting (an occupation which she had not tried since the shock came upon her; but which she would have gone to the evening before if it had not been for the restraint of Uncle Robert's presence. It was the unwonted idleness of her fingers which had made her so at a loss that night, I thought) and me with my book, that the third plan was unfolded.

CHAPTER II.

We had sat but a few minutes when Clarence gravely changed his seat from the chair where he had been sitting, into the arm-chair by the stove, which had always been called "father's chair," either as if thus asserting his position as the head of the family, or perhaps from an idea that what he was about to say would have more weight if advanced

from that position, and when my mother glanced at him as if in surprise, he looked full at her and asked, "Have you thought much to-day about what Uncle Robert said, and of his two plans for us?"

"Not much, my son, and I do not feel ready to decide yet. We can live as we are for a while, and when I can, I will go over and talk with your Aunt Matilda and the squire about it. Robert is a smart man in the city, and in his own business, but he has not judgment for us down here upon a farm, I am afraid, and I cannot bear to think of leaving the old farm, unless there is no other way for us to do."

"But I think I can see another way, mother, besides either of Uncle Robert's plans, and I have thought it carefully over, and *now* I want you to think of it and see if it is not better than the others; it will enable us to stay here together upon the old place."

"How?"

"Do you know that I am sixteen years old, and Ned is over fourteen, and we know how to do almost all kinds of farm-work, and I can do as much as a man at most work; and I think we can run the farm so as to make a living for ourselves."

"And I am willing to work just as hard as ever I can," says Ned, "and I will help milk and do chores and drive team, and shovel and hoe, and help take care of hay, and dig potatoes, and cut wood, or do anything, if you only will say that you will not go to Blackington. Just think of those boys we used to see when I went there with father, begging for apples, as if they were half-starved, and swearing if father wouldn't give them any; and if he did, they came back again, lying, and saying that they had not had any. I knew them even when they had swapped hats and coats before they came back. You wouldn't want me to look like them, would you, mother?"

"No, Ned; I should not expect you to look or act like

them, even if we moved there, but I cannot say about you and Clarence managing the farm. You are only boys, and I am afraid you could not do work enough to make a living on the farm. It would be quite an undertaking."

"But, mother," said Clarence, again in his moderate way, "I have thought it all over and I know just what lots father meant to plant next year, and I know how to do the work, and I shall not plant quite as much, so that there will not be so much to take care of, but I will put on manure heavy where I do plant, and see if I can't raise as much on a little field as we used to on big ones. I heard Squire Grey tell father one day that he ought to do so. And, then, I remember what I have read in the old "Farmers," and "Ploughmans," and "Cultivators" that I have borrowed, and I think I can manage it so it will pay."

"But that mortgage will be a drag on us all the time, and you never can make a living for us and pay that; only you two boys."

"Well, we can pay the interest on it as has always been done, and the squire will not want anything more than that until we get older and can make more. And you can make the butter, and Alice can take care of the hens and chickens, we will sell butter and eggs and chickens, and I will raise calves and pigs and lots of other things on the farm to sell, and I know we can get money enough to live on, and pay the interest besides. What do you think of the plan, mother?"

"I am afraid you and Ned do not realize how hard you must work; and what will you do if you have a job that you do not know how to do, or that is too heavy for you, or if any of the cattle are sick?"

"If I do not know just how to do, I will ask some of the farmers in the neighborhood, if I cannot find out by reading my papers; and if I have a hard job I will get Jake Wood to help me. He knows how to do everything after some

fashion or other, and we could get him for a few days at any time, you know."

"'Talk of angelsand you may hear their wings,'" saidmy mother; "I believe I hear Jake's wings now."

And, surely enough, we could hear a lumbering tread coming up the foot-path to the backdoor, which certainly sounded like the foot-falls of the individual mentioned, though there was not much resemblance to the usual idea of angels' wings; but as I never heard angels' wings, I cannot tell. And while he is coming in, let me introduce him to your acquaintance. Jake is one of those harmless individuals who have never settled down to any steady occupation. There is perhaps a taint of the blood of some Indian ancestor in his veins; such is the usual opinion of the country people about him, and it is borne out as much by his habits as by his long, straight, black hair, dark complexion, and prominent cheek bones. He lives alone in a little cottage near the edge of the great swamp, and has done so since his mother died, many years ago. Alone, I say, excepting a hound, which is his constant companion indoors and out. He is a famous hunter, trapper, and fisherman, and by his earnings in that way, and the products of a little garden near his cottage, and, with the proceeds of berry-picking in the summer, he is independent, and under no obligations to work for any other man; yet he can be got to work a few days when any neighboring farmer is hard pushed; but it will be only a few days before the roving spirit will seize him, and he must be off. Some favorite spots of berries have ripened and must be picked, and Jake knows many such places almost inaccessible to any one else; or he gets to hankering for rabbit or partridge, meat or fish, and off he goes. I have heard that he once worked for Bill Varnum over a week, when Bill was sick, and no one else would work for him because they thought Bill was poor pay. At any rate, there is no surer way to get Jake's help than to tell him that you had been

everywhere else and could not get any one to help you. But it is time to let him speak for himself, which he will not be backward about doing, now he is in the room, with his hat under his chair, his dog Rover beside him, and his game-bag in his lap. Jake would resent any attempt to take his hat and hang it up as an insult, and I am not sure but Rover would also resent it. The game-bag is not empty, and I feel sure that he means to leave its contents here. I am planning already with what I will refill it, for such exchanges are not uncommon with us.

"Good-evening, ma'am, and young folks," said Jake, as he took the chair which I put by the stove for him; "thought I must come in and see you a few minutes, bein' as I was comin' this way. Should have brought my wife along, too, only the baby is having the hoopin' cough and she couldn't leave it and daresn't bring it." This, by the way, is a favorite joke of Jake's, and seldom fails to win a smile from the younger portion of his audience. The idea of Jake having a wife and baby.

"I am sure, Jacob," said my mother, smiling faintly, "I should be glad to see your wife, if she could come with you."

"Well, ma'am, you just wait till a sartian little gal gets a half-dozen years older, and you may see stranger things than that," said he, with a significant glance at me. "If she only learns to eat partridge-meat and chestnuts, which is all we have down at our house, she may grow up so as to suit me. Just you look in this, Miss Alice, and see if you can't find some better place for what is in here than in Jake's game-bag."

And I, knowing Jake's way too well to feel any offence at his remarks, or the way in which he proffers his well-meant gift, take it to the pantry, to find a plump pair of partridges, and the rest of the bag filled with chestnuts, as he had indicated, and I called mother to consult about the propriety of

filling it with apples and a generous strip of pork; and when I had done so I came back to hear Jake saying: —

"Most distressing circumstances, ma'am, and happening so sudden like. But, as the preacher said, 'In the midst of life we are in death,' and we don't know whose turn may come next. And now, I suppose, you will be breaking up and selling out. I declare it always makes me feel almost as bad as a funeral to see a man's little sticks and tools that he has worked to get together, just such as suit him, and that he has got used to, and the critters that he has taken care of till he likes them, faults and all, sold off at auction, and going East and West and North and South, 'mongst folks that don't think nothing of them only that they got them for so many cents. I reckon sometimes 'twould be better to do as the Injuns did. They had their bows and arrows and tools buried with 'em, and the horse killed on the grave, too, they say. I know about the arrows and tools, anyway, 'cause I've found them in the graves. But, to be sure, what a hole it would take to put in Squire Grey's tools, now!"

"But," interposed Clarence, who felt as we all did, that Jake's jesting was a little ill-timed, "we are thinking of trying to get along without selling. I have been telling mother that Ned and I can run the farm so as to make a living off of it, and if there is anything we don't know how to do, or are not able to do, we must look to you to help us out. You would, I know, wouldn't you, Jake?"

"Stand up and let me look at you, boy," said Jake, gravely. He did so, and we all looked. Not a very tall lad of his age, but broad-shouldered and well-made, with an earnest look upon his face that showed that he would not be hindered in carrying out his plan by trifles. "Why, you was only a boy when I helped your father cut the bog meadow last fall, and now you look like a man. You'll do. How is Ned? can you help about this job, boy?"

"I am willing to do almost anything rather than to leave the old farm and see things sold off, and I can do lots of work when I have a mind to."

"Well said, Ned. I reckon you are the right grit, and if anything old Jake can do will help yer, you need not be afraid to name it. I could run over for a day or two almost any time, and I know how to do lots of odd jobs that will come handy to you chaps, I expect."

"I am sure, Jacob," said my mother, who, I fancied, did not quite like rushing so hastily to a conclusion of such an important matter, and perhaps thought Jake not the best adviser that could be chosen, "the boys ought to be thankful for your very kind offer, and I am also; but we have not yet decided upon it, and I must think it over and talk to Squire Grey about it before I agree to it; and until then I should prefer not to have anything said about it among the neighbors, so I hope you will not speak of it, Jacob."

"Well, ma'am," said Jake, "I always calculated that a man had two ears, and two eyes, and only one tongue, because the Almighty meant that he should not tell more than half what he saw, and half what he heard, and my tongue hasn't worn my teeth out yet. Guess they can stand guard over it awhile longer, anyway, and if I want to talk very bad about other folks' business, I just take Rover into the house where we are all alone, and I talk to him, and he never tells anybody of it. But I must be getting home again, or the wife will pull my hair when I do get there. And I allow that the job is as good as settled if you are going to talk to Squire Grey about it, for he has got a head, the squire has; and he can see as far into a millstone as the man that picks it, and he knows the stock there is in these lads.

"I guess, Miss Alice, you and mother didn't lighten the game-bag much while you had it in the closet there, but I shall see when I get home. Come, Rover," and Jake reached

for his hat, swung the strap of the bag over his neck, and was backing out of the door before we could make any reply to his remarks, and the hearty "Good-night, ma'am; take care of yourself for me, Alice! Good luck to you, boys; Jake will help you all he can, every time," which he delivered as he got into the doorway, just ready to close it after him, might have been considered as his farewell shot.

There were a few moments' silence after he went out, until we heard the last echo of his shrill whistle going toward his solitary home, and then Clarence began again: —

"And will you, mother, actually go over and talk to the squire about it?"

"Yes, I think I will, for I should be very glad to try your plan if I can see any hopes of your succeeding in it; but I feel very doubtful about it, and you must have a stronger advocate, and a better promise of help, if you need it, than Jake."

"Now, mother, you know Jake is not lazy, for he is a first-rate hand to work when you can get him, and he is not to blame if he wants to hunt or fish part of the time, especially if, as some folks say, he makes more at it than he does at work for the farmers. And his promise is always good, for he always comes to work if he says he will. But may we all go to Aunt Matilda's with you? I shall want to talk to the squire, and Ned and Sis will like a day there, and we can do the chores and go over there to-morrow morning, and get back at night early enough to feed and milk."

To this, mother gave a reluctant consent, I thought, but I thought she also was desirous of having a decision reached upon this important question, and indeed it was quite time, for it was now late in January, and if she should decide to sell, the early spring would be the best time, while if she adopted Clarence's plan, the sooner it was decided upon the sooner we should feel as if we were settled, for since Uncle Robert's words I had felt very much as if we were living

upon sufferance, liable to be turned out at any minute, and so, I thought, had mother. But nothing more was said of the plan that evening, although Ned and Clarence had some talk about the fine stalk at the squire's, and Ned and I laid our plans for the day, knowing that our big brother would be apt to be closeted a part of the day with the old folks, of whom he had so suddenly become a part, or would become a part if he was promoted to farm manager. We had not been to the squire's for a long time, nor had we seen him or Aunt Matilda, excepting at the funeral, when the etiquette of Brookfield would not have allowed anything but the interchange of the common salutations between those who were known as mourners, even if our feelings had led us to desire it.

In some sections of New England it is customary for the family to provide a hearty repast, of which all the relatives, friends, and assistants at the ceremonies must partake after the return from the burying-ground. But this custom was as yet unknown in Brookfield, and the people there would have as soon thought of finishing the funeral ceremonies with dancing as with feasting. Those who came so far that they could not return the same day, as Uncle Robert had done, were hospitably received and entertained until they could return home; but those who lived within a reasonable distance for walking or riding, were expected to return home directly after the services.

CHAPTER III.

The next morning the boys were up in good time, and after starting the fire and filling the tea-kettle, were off to the barn, where they finished all the morning chores before breakfast, and were ready directly afterward to give the cattle hay enough to last them till night, and harness up the old horse

into the covered wagon, ready for a start as soon as mother and I could clear away the breakfast dishes and get ourselves ready. Luckily, although it was midwinter, it was not very cold, and the ground was nearly bare of snow; so the ride of five miles did not promise to be a very unpleasant one, nor a long one, although old Charley was more famous for his performance at the plough and the team-wagon than upon the road. On, past many small farms, where their owners struggled manfully to wrest a living from rocky soils or sandy hills; with tools fifty years behind the times; with cattle that were worth scarcely more in the spring than the hay that they ate during the winter would have sold for in the fall; with teams that would scarcely draw their own provender for a day's journey; by larger farms, where the owners derived larger incomes from the sale of wood and timber and charcoal; through woods where the ring of the axe could be heard; by the very place where my father had met his death; by the Corners where a horse and a yoke of oxen were waiting for the new shoes that the blacksmith was hammering upon, throwing bright sparks out of doors even as we rode by — up hill and down hill, we rode on.

Let me tell you more about the place we are going to visit and the people we shall see there, rather than of our ride; for you can find such drives anywhere in New England, but not such people as the squire and Aunt Matilda very often, nor such farms as theirs, I fear. The place was a large farm, with a comfortable brick-house standing a little back from the street, and hidden from passers by when in direct front view, or very near, by a thick grove of evergreens, elms, maples, larches, and other trees that I knew not by name then. They were planted out, as I have since learned, by one who was skilled in forest trees, so that the trees stood at irregular distances and apparently in disorder, as they would have grown in the woods from Nature's

planting; and yet it was art of the most artistic sort which had dictated the spot for every one. Not a tree grew there, even the white-birch which showed its chalky trunk and pale green leaves among more pretentious trees, but had had its effect upon the surrounding trees, and upon the whole landscape, carefully calculated by a master-mind before it was placed where it stood. And yet the man who had done this was said to have been a half-witted sort of a chap, who was good for nothing else; but he had studied the woods, and could place these trees and calculate their effect in masses as easily as a florist would arrange a bouquet. Not one tree overshadowed another, nor seemed out of place — no sameness, but the variety which we see in the wild wood. If it is "the height of art to conceal art," then this was it. By the side of this grove or plantation of forest trees, a winding road led from the highway up to the house, and at a certain point, where we emerged from a wood almost as heavy and dark as the thickest pine forest, we came out in full view of the mansion directly in front of us, a few stately elms standing before it upon the lawn, back of it the extensive orchards, and to our left the barns, painted and clapboarded, with ventilated cupola and a vane, and with large sheds enclosing the yards on north and east, which, in their turn, were sheltered from the winds, as also from sight, excepting from the south, by hedges of evergreens. Perhaps it was because everything was neat and tidy about the place, and because the squire's horses and cattle were always smooth and fat and well-cared for, and his tools of the best patterns and in good repair, and well-painted and housed when not in use, that the opinion was so generally entertained that the squire's farm cost more money to carry on than all it brought in. But if the people had known just how much the farm contributed toward a real expensive living; if they could have counted the cost of all the fruit of all sorts, the milk and cream and butter, the eggs and poultry, the vegetables

and meat which so bountifully supplied the tables there; and the horses and carriages always ready for use, as I have since seen people count them who have lived in similar style in cities or villages, I think that they might have changed their opinion a little.

But here we are at the door, and the squire comes out to help us out of the wagon, and Aunt Matilda waits at the door to welcome us in, and while the boys, Cousin Henry leading the way, go to the stable to put the horse in, we go into the warm sitting-room, and mingle our tears again at the memory of that sad scene of but a few days ago. There is a little surprise, scarcely concealed, at so early a visit from us, but mother says she "wanted to talk to the squire a little, by and by, about the business," and at once it seems the most natural thing in the world that she should be there. But nothing is said about the nature of the business until the boys come in after a long inspection of the stables and the stock that were in them. Then mother called and led the way into the squire's own room. This room opened out of the sitting-room, and unless the doors were closed between them, which they were not on this occasion, there was not any appearance of secrecy, but I doubt if my mother would have thought the squire's opinion was worth listening to if it had been given in the family sitting-room. At any rate, it would not have had official weight, as it did in that little room. Perhaps the squire himself would not have been able to think as clearly or speak so much like one "clothed in authority" if he were not in that arm-chair in the little room.

But once fairly seated in there, with Clarence at her right hand, mother told her story plainly enough, telling first of Uncle Robert's plans for us, and then of her dislike at the idea of leaving the old farm, and of Clarence's idea and of her doubts and fears in regard to the possibility of his succeeding in making a living and paying interest and taxes, and all that, if he attempted it. Clarence said nothing; but I could

see from where I sat how carefully he watched the squire's countenance as the story went on, and I almost thought I could hear his heart beat when the squire glanced at him in astonishment as mother told of his daring to think that he could manage the farm. After my mother had finished, the squire waited a few minutes as if in thought, and I am sure my heart beat loudly, for I felt that in the decision which we should get lay our fate. It rested with this man to say whether we were to remain in our home, which had so long been a happy one to me, or whether we should be banished to Blackington, with all its horrors, known or imaginary. I know now that Blackington is quite a pleasant village when one is in the pleasant part of it, but I had only rode through the streets where shops and factories and tenement-houses most abounded.

"Well, Mrs. Reynolds," said the squire at last — it was another official notion to call her by her title and surname; in the sitting-room he would have called her "Helen." I could not help noticing this in the midst of my anxiety, and it made his words seem to have more weight—"I do not like the idea of your going to Blackington, anyway. It is not a very good place to bring up the children, I daresay, though under your excellent care and instruction I have no doubt they would turn out well even among greater temptations than they would meet there; but the boys would have their trades all to learn if they went there to work in shop or factory, and would not get much wages at first, nor would you like to board such fellows as work in those shops, though there are some fine young men among them. But if you kept a boarding-house, you must, of necessity, take in some that you would not like to associate with, or have Alice know. But on the farm you are at home; the boys have their trades, the noblest in the world,— the trade of growing food for all mankind, Mrs. Reynolds — almost learned, or, at least, well underway; and although young, they are willing and smart,

and I would advise letting them try for a year or two anyway. They may possibly make some blunders, and it is possible that you may fall a little behind the first year or two, unless they work very hard and very steadily, and are very lucky; but they will be growing older and stronger and wiser every year, and I feel sure they will succeed finally. If you do not meet your interest every year, I shall not be hard upon you, and could even help you to a little more money if it was needed and I thought you were using it wisely. The farm would stand a much heavier mortgage than I have on it. But I hope that, at the worst, you would not fall behind more than your interest, and a lucky year after the boys get a little older would make that right again. If my advice will do you any good, I tell you I think you had better take this risk than to sell and move, which would be a greater risk, and I will look after Master Clarence a little and give him my advice about anything that he needs it on. If you only had a little more capital, to get better stock and tools, I am sure that the farm would pay well."

And with a sigh, as I thought, at the unfortunate condition of those who had not the better stock and tools, the squire arose, as if he had no more to say. My mother also arose, but, before passing out into the sitting-room again, she replied: —

"More capital, to buy stock and tools, is what I have not got, squire, and I do not mean to put any heavier mortgage on the farm to get it, either. If the boys cannot get along with such as their father had there, and left there, they must earn it for themselves, or they may give it up entirely."

And Clarence added: "I can get along with what is there until I am able to buy better, and I hope, by and by, to be able to buy Jersey cows and mowing-machines and all those things for myself."

So the matter was settled, and we were to stay upon the farm. Those only who have felt the dread of losing a dearly-

loved home can realize how the weight was lifted off my heart, and how rapidly the lump in my throat which had so oppressed me for days past, when I had thought of what might be, melted away. I could almost have sung in spite of the black garments which I wore. And shortly after dinner came, and we ate, I at least, and I thought the others, with a better appetite than while we were in doubt. And then the squire and Clarence walked out together, in which walk I think Clarence received many hints in regard to his management of the farm, and also was led to advance quite freely his ideas in regard thereto. And Ned and Henry made a tour of the ground and farm buildings again, while mother and I sat and talked with Aunt Matilda and my cousins. There were two girls — Matilda, a beauty of eighteen, and Mary, a little more than a year younger. Henry was but little younger than Clarence, but in his ways nearer a mate for Ned. Then, there was an elder son, Thomas, who was studying law in Boston, and whom I had not seen for many years, though I had heard much praise of him from Aunt Matilda and the girls, who looked upon him as one who was destined for greater things even than being a country squire. I could scarcely conceive of any higher position, but felt that there might be such a thing. And before night we went home, and I felt as if that home was never so precious as now, when we had seemed so near losing it.

CHAPTER IV.

And now let me give you some description of this farm, which was of so much importance to us. Imagine an old-fashioned two-story house, that had once been painted red and now was sadly in need of painting again, standing a little back from the road. No blinds, no piazza, the windows

small, and with small glass. The massive chimney in the centre, two front rooms facing the west, one each side of the front door, a long kitchen back of the chimney, with doors opening out of it into each front room, a bedroom at one end of the kitchen, a pantry at the other, and the chamber stairway by the side of the pantry, while the cellar-stairs went down under them, from a door opening out of the porch. The porch was on the north-east corner of the house, and contained a wash-room and a wood-room. There was a corn-barn a little way from the house, and another building, in one end of which was a piggery, and in the other a small hen-house. Beyond these, the barn, low, unpainted, about thirty feet long and twenty-eight feet wide. The great doors opening to the west — the buildings all stood upon the east side of the road — a small door at the south-west corner, giving entrance to the horse-stall, and one at the south-east, opening into the cattle stables. At the south side was the barn-yard, surrounded by a high board fence ; no shed, no cellar, and no watering-place. The cattle and horse were turned into the pasture twice every day to drink from a brook a few rods away, unless it was such bad weather that it was better to bring water from the well at the house. Around the buildings were a number of apple trees that stood where they stood in the days of my grandfather, though many of them had long been so much decayed at the heart that the hens had stolen their nests and reared broods of chickens in their capacious trunks, gaining entrance where large limbs had been cut off near the ground. As for the land, I can give you no better idea than by reproducing here a sketch of the fields, which Clarence made a short time after he took charge of the farm. I know not whether he took the idea from something he had read, or from his talk with the squire, but I give it, as I found it a short time ago, in an old ledger which had been my father's and his father's before him, but which their scanty accounts had never filled :—

" Field No. 1, around the house, called Six Acres, but as

the buildings take up some room, and the yards more, upon which we get no grass, I shall call it Five Acres, from which we got last year four loads of hay that father called four tons. Slopes to the west; has not been ploughed for many years. There are twenty apple trees, which are all old and do not bear much. I must trim them up and try to make them last until I get a new orchard bearing.

"Field No. 2, back or east of the barn; about four acres, very rocky, sloping to the north and west. Here I mean to put the new orchard. We cut two tons of hay last year on this field. I don't know when it was ploughed last.

"Field No. 3, side of road, north of barn; about two acres, runs down to the river. Was sowed to grass two years ago, after raising potatoes and corn, and cut last year two large loads of hay, part clover. Between this and No. 2 is a lane which goes from barn-yard to pasture. No. 2 does not go quite to the river, and the cows go on the north and east of it, and No. 1 and No 4.

"Field No. 4, south of Field No. 1, eight acres, runs from road back to pasture; slopes to south-west. Father had corn there last year, and we got two hundred and sixty baskets of ears of good corn, besides the small corn that we fatted the cow and pigs on. East end is sandy, but the squire said it was good land if it only had manure. It is now in rye, which father sowed among the corn.

"Field No. 5, across the road from barn, between pond and road, about two acres, but the side next the pond is too wet to plough. Father has always had a garden of about an acre next the road, and the rest cuts about a ton of rather poor hay. Father used to wish the rocks in field No. 2 were built into a wall along the side of the pond, and some of the gravel from the hill in the pasture was put on the land below the garden, but he never begun it and I don't know as I ever shall. I suppose it would take many loads of gravel and a great deal of work to build the wall.

"Field No. 6, twelve acres, south of No. 5; north end slopes to the south, but most of it is nearly level; a wet, miry place in the middle, which I never knew to be ploughed, running from road to pond. Father had about two acres in north-east corner and three on south edge, being the two driest parts of it, planted to potatoes, and we had about three hundred bushels of good ones. On the rest we cut six loads of hay, what we call 'Deacon English.' If it were drained, the squire says, it would cut more grass than all we cut now, and I mean to do it if I live.

"Field No. 7 is properly a part of the pasture, being a three-acre lot of bog meadow, lying by the side of the river, a quarter of a mile north-east of the house, on a little brook that runs out of the woodland. I think the mud is very much like the meadow-muck, or peat, that I read of in the papers as being so good to put into the manure heap. I shall ask the squire about it, and if it is I shall draw out a lot of it when I get a chance. The cows go in there and eat a little when the grass first starts in the spring, and again after we have mowed it; but it is so coarse they do not like it very well. We cut four or five loads of bog hay, which we mostly use for bedding. Do not always mow the farther end of it, as it is more work to pole it to shore than it is worth. I wonder if it is possible to do anything with it but to dig mud out of it to put into the barn-yard, and cut bedding off it? Must ask the squire about that, and about cranberries. And I must read all I can about the cranberry business, for I think it pays great profits, and I may have a chance on some of these lots to try it.

"Field No. 8, pasture and woodland, east of all the rest. There ought to be eighty-three acres in all, of which thirty or forty may be covered with wood, and the rest very poor pasture. It is much larger than the squire's pasture, and he keeps about twenty cows, while here four have hard work to find enough to eat. It does not do to turn the oxen in with

the cows, but we have to put them into the mowing fields after haying, and have to put the cows into them, too, as soon as we can.

"We cut then what we called fifteen tons of hay, besides the bog in the pasture, and with that and the corn-fodder we make out to keep the horse, yoke of steers, and four cows. Ten years from now I mean to tell a different story, if I live and do well."

Now you see what a task this boy had placed before himself, and, in part, how far his ambition reached ahead.

CHAPTER V.

The next morning, as soon as the chores were done, Clarence came and asked mother for a dollar that he might go to the saw-mill, about a mile below, and buy a load of slabs. We could get a load for that price as large as the horse and oxen could draw home, and many people bought them for fire-wood; but we never had been in the habit of doing so, and mother asked in some surprise what he wanted of them.

"If I had a few of them that I could pick out of the load I could use them instead of boards for some work I want to do about the barn. I have nails enough, and I want to make the barn warmer. I can do it very easily, and the papers say that a warm barn is better for the stock, and saves hay and grain. Now, our old barn is very cold, and it will cost but little to make it much warmer. There are cracks back of the cows where I can almost run my finger through. What slabs are not fit to use for that will do for kindling-wood, and I have a number of other jobs that I want to do with the best of them."

"Couldn't you do with a few that you could get for less money?"

"It will take just as long to go after a few, and about as long to pick out such as I want, as it would to get a full load, and they might not like to sell them and have me pick them out. Deacon Smith buys them for fire-wood, and sells what he cuts in his woods. You know he would not do that unless it was cheapest to do so."

"Well, I will let you have the dollar, but you must think that the dollars are scarce, and it depends upon you to get more for us.'

So he and Ned started for the mill, and before noon were back with a fine load of slabs, which were thrown off and sorted in two piles, one pile suited for the contemplated work, and the other as fit only for fire-wood. Much to my surprise, the first pile was very large and the other very small, but Ned explained by saying that they had picked out of a very large heap, and had the privilege of taking such as they wanted. Some of the slabs were four feet long and others as much as twelve. Ned said the short ones were box-board slabs and the others came off long boards.

After dinner, it being warm and pleasant, a sort of February thaw, I was allowed to go out and help at the first job, which consisted in nailing the four feet-slabs against the side of the barn; the lower end against the barn sill, and the upper end against the joist, which was about three feet from the floor. This left a space about three inches wide between the slabs and the outside of the barn, which Ned and I stuffed full of the poor meadow hay. Although the space was so small yet it seemed to hold a large amount of hay, but after it was put in, and the last slab was put on, it seemed as if it were impossible for any wind to enter there, let it blow never so hard. Above the joist Clarence nailed slabs over the largest cracks, so that it seemed as if the stables were much warmer than before. While we were at work, Jake Wood came along the road, and, attracted by the sound of the hammering, came into the barn. Seeing what we were at, he exclaimed, "And so the

squire thought same as Jake did for once, and you have begun."

"Yes," said Clarence, "the squire thought best for us to try it; and I am trying to make these stables warmer."

"Well, I reckon it's a good idea, for I never like to see cattle in the barn shivering as if they were out on the lee side of a hay-stack. Always seemed as if they must be hungry if they were cold. I know I want a powerful sight to eat in cold weather, more than I do in summer."

"That is what the papers say: that cattle need more feed if kept in cold stables."

"Well, I never thought no great shakes of farming by the papers and books, but they might happen right once in a while; but they mostly talk as if a fellow had got to spend more than he makes or else he wouldn't make nothing."

"But it may be a fact that it pays best to put money into farming business if you have it to put in," says Clarence. "You know the big stores that have the most money spent in getting everything to sell that people call for, are generally the ones that make the most money. 'Money makes money,' Uncle Robert says, and if it does in other things, why shouldn't it in farming?"

"I allow you are right, young man," says Jake, "but this here is going to make it awful dark in here, and you will have to leave a door or a window open to see to do your work, and that will make it colder than the cracks do."

"I have thought of that, Jake, and I wish I had some windows to put in here, but I don't know where to find them, and if I leave the window or door open when I am doing chores, I can shut it up when I get through, and have the barn warm at night, at any rate."

"There, now," said Jake, "I shouldn't wonder if I could tell you where to find windows enough. You know Bill Giles fixed up that old house of his last spring, and put in bigger windows and tore down the old porch and built a new

one. I expect he has got all those windows stowed away somewhere, and they aint of no airthly use to him. I don't doubt but you could get them cheap enough."

"But I have no money to buy them with, and I don't want to ask mother for any, for she has but little, and I don't mean to spend more than I make, if I can help it."

"You don't need no money, I don't believe, for he hasn't got no team, and if you would plough for him a day or two next spring, you would have money coming in instead of going out, and the oxen would in that way sorter pay for the windows in their own house," and Jake chuckled at the idea of thus getting the best of the oxen and Bill Giles at the same time.

"Well, I will think about it, and maybe go and see Mr. Giles to-morrow. Now I must put up the cattle and do the chores," said Clarence, and Jake went his way, having first received an invitation to stop in again and see how we got along, and promised in response to "keep an eye on us and see that we went straight, for," said he, "I feel kinder responsible for you now, seein' as I advised this plan before Squire Grey did."

Next morning Clarence was off early, and quickly came back after the oxen and wagon, with which he went off toward Mr. Giles's house and soon back again with a load of boards, old but mostly sound, and an old door or two, which I recognized as a part of the porch which had been torn down, and a large pile of windows on top of the load, and with Bill Giles following after the load.

Now, Mr. Giles was known to us by reputation as a good-natured, clever fellow, a good carpenter, but "as lazy as all day long," who had lately come into possession of the old house and a few acres of land by the death of an old aunt, and he had modernized the house at a considerable expense, which it was thought his means did not warrant, although he performed the labor himself. Mother was a little worried at

first for fear Clarence had hired him to do the work of his contemplated improvements, but was soon relieved by seeing Mr. Giles go off down the road again, after a short stop at the barn. Clarence soon came in and told us: "I had first-rate luck, I bought sixteen windows for thirty cents apiece, and all those boards and doors for two dollars more, and I am to pay for them by ploughing for Mr. Giles next spring, and he has loaned me some tools to do the work with, and has showed me how to do it better than I could have found out by myself in a week."

"But what did you want of the boards and doors, my son?" said my mother.

"Oh, I am going to fix up a larger hen-house, so that Alice can have plenty to do this summer in raising chickens and taking care of them. You know the hens pay better than anything else, and I am going in for making the farm pay in some other way than by hard work."

And off he went to the barn again, where I soon followed him, to find that he and Ned were cutting holes through the side of the barn, with the aid of the tools that were loaned by Mr. Giles. Before night they had cut a place for one half-window on the east side of the cow stable; two more on the east side of the threshing floor, and two on the south end of the barn, back of the cattle, and another back of the horse, and one on the door of the horse-stall, which, as you may remember, I told you was in the south-west corner of the barn. And they were all fixed so as to slide back when it was desired to open them, or to shut closely when it was cold. Thanks to the marking of Mr. Giles they were put in in a very workmanlike manner, and in their proper places. Before night Mr. Giles came back, and approved of what had been done; and then went with Clarence to the sand-hill back of the house, where they had a long talk, and Mr. Giles drove some little sticks down and seemed to be planning something which I thought might be the hen-house

which I heard of that morning for the first time. There was a place here where it was said gravel was taken out to build the dam for the old grist-mill which used to stand in the lower edge of what Clarence called "Field No. 3." The mill has been gone many years, but a part of the old dam stood there yet. In the pasture is what is called the gravel hole, open to south and west, where they dug into the south side of the hill after gravel; and here I thought Clarence had planned for his hen-house, and I did not like the idea of having to take care of the hens and chickens if it was to be so far from the house. When he came in I asked him about it, and he said my guess was right. When I expostulated, he said: "You see it is to be more of a summer hen-house than anything else. This one will do very well for winter, when I have put one or two more windows in it, but that will be a warm place, with lots of good gravel and sand for them, and if we should keep so many hens next winter that we should need to use it, Ned and I can take care of them then. In summer you will find it only a pleasant walk up there."

The next day the boys were busy digging into the side of the old sand-bank and putting in posts for the new hen-house, and mother found me employment in the house, and although at night both had blistered hands and were willing to go to bed early, I could not see that their enthusiasm had flagged at all, while I rather thought Ned looked up to Clarence with a respect which he had not been wont to feel for his elder brother, and upon the second day they were as eager to get off to their work as if it had been only play. Before noon I saw Bill Giles going up there, and, to my surprise, he stayed at work until nearly night. When he passed the house, going toward home, my mother felt it necessary to go out and tell him that she could not afford to pay carpenter's wages for the work up there, and she was afraid Clarence could not work for him long enough to pay him that way, if

he was intending to take care of the farm at home; but he quickly silenced her by saying, laughingly, that he had not anything else to do, and he reckoned it was just as well for him to be there as down at the tavern.

"Besides that, ma'am, it is as good fun as any play I ever done to work with those little chaps, they are so earnest about it all, as if their fortunes depended upon it."

And we could hear his hearty laugh ringing after he had passed the barn. By this time it had attained quite a resemblance to a building, as seen from the house, and Ned was very anxious for mother and I to go and look at it, but we did not, for the wind blew cold and the following day was the Sabbath, and we intended to go to church. We did, however, go to the barn that mother might see how much more pleasant it looked there with the windows in it, and the cracks carefully stopped. So ended the week which had begun so sadly for us. Already through the heavy clouds light seemed to be breaking. Even in our great affliction we could rejoice that there was one greater depth of misery — the misery of having to leave our loved home — which we were not to be called upon then to fathom. And although we were entering upon what seemed like a doubtful experiment, yet the calm self-confidence of my elder brother gave us courage to indulge ourselves in hoping for the best.

CHAPTER VI.

As my purpose is to tell you of our farm and its management, rather than to dwell upon other topics, I will not pause to describe the congregation nor the sermon, though as the venerable pastor made appropriate reference to our sudden bereavement, and prayed that we might be led to place our

trust in "Him who is the God of the widow and the fatherless," it made an impression upon my mind which had been made by no religious service before, and which has never been obliterated. Many came up to tender their sympathy to my mother, some of whom we had previously looked upon as strangers, but if they could have known that all the time I was more in the mood for giving thanks for escaping the prospect of Blackington, with its real and imaginary horrors, I fear that I should have obtained but little sympathy there.

With Monday morning came a snow-storm, which, for some days, put a stop to work out of doors, but Clarence was busy fixing up little household conveniences. Little shelves were made and put into almost every imaginable place, which were afterward found to be most handy; hanging-shelves were securely put up in the cellar, buttons were fixed on doors in the house and on the other buildings, wood and slabs were cut and neatly piled in the wood-house, tools were mended, old Charley's harness was brought in, washed, stitched, and oiled as it never was before, and I know not what would have been done if the weather had not at last come so that they could begin on the hen-house again. At last it cleared up, and they were able to work there, and the first day I was invited to help put hay into the walls, as we did at the barn. It was my first inspection of the new building, and I was glad to satisfy my curiosity in regard to it. It was twelve feet wide and twenty-four feet long, five feet high at the back side and about nine on the front, facing the south. The sides were covered with the twelve-foot slabs from the mill, excepting where spaces had been left for doors and windows. The roof was made of some of the old boards which came from Mr. Giles's, and the cracks in the roof were carefully battened, as Clarence called it, with other boards or slabs, so that but very little rain could come through. Ned and I were set to lining the walls by nailing slabs to the posts upon the inside and stuffing hay between them and the outside,

while Clarence went at the more difficult job of fixing in the windows and the door, at which he was soon assisted by Bill Giles, who sauntered up with his hands in his pockets, and at first showed Clarence how to do the work, and then soon after threw off his coat with the remark that he "might as well help a little as to stand there and freeze looking on," and was quickly as busy as any of us, and accomplishing much more. I doubt if he would have worked with as good a relish if he had been hired by the day, and feel sure that he would not if he had been working for himself. With his skilful help five whole windows were quickly put into the south side, and a door upon the south at the west corner; then a half-window was put in the east end near the roof, and another opposite to it in the west end, and the building was completed, as I thought. But it was to be furnished, and roosts were made and put across the east end. I wondered why the windows were all crowded toward the door, but Clarence explained that that was the bedroom, and he did not want too much light there. The roosts were only about two and a half feet from the ground, for Clarence said he did not want the hens to have too far to fly down, as if he got Brahma hens, as he meant to, it would hurt them to come down, as they were so heavy. Then rows of nests were made on the back side and west end, one row on the ground and another just above them, giving room for about forty nests. Clarence said the lower row he meant to keep to set the hens in. At Bill's suggestion Ned was sent with the horse to bring up a lot of laths that came out of the old porch, which were of no use to him excepting for kindling-wood, but would do well for nailing on the windows to keep the hens from flying through them, and for making coops which would fasten the hens into the lower nests while setting, or rather, would let them come off to the gravel floor, but keep them from going back on any other nest but their own. While he was gone Bill made a feed-box by building a bench midway of the room and fasten-

ing on it a V-shaped trough large enough to hold a b ushel of corn, with a narrow crack at the bottom where the corn would rattle down upon the bench. But little could come out before the heap on the bench would stop the crack, and no more could come until the hens had eaten the heap, or a part of it. In the ground he also put a trough for water, with a cover nearly over it, where there was just room for the hens to drink without scattering dirt into their water. I noticed that this was put where the sun shone on it longest, and the cover was made of a broken tin-pan, because Bill said it would warm the water more in the sunshine than if the cover was of wood. The feed-box was put upon the bench, I was told, in order to keep rats from getting at the corn, and to make it more secure, an old-tin pan was nailed, bottom up, upon the top of each leg, under the bench. Before night all was finished, and I was sent to the house to ask mother to come and examine it. I doubt if the architect of any of the magnificent public buildings in this country felt more genuine pride when the committee came to examine and approve his work after it was completed, than did my brother when mother stepped into the building and glanced around.

"Surely," said she, "you have done very well indeed with what you had to work with. But why have you built it so large? It is large enough for an hundred fowl."

"It was just about as easy to make it large as small, for the slabs were just so long, and I hope to have an hundred fowl here next winter, if I have good luck."

"I think Mr. Giles must have helped you a good deal, for it looks more like his work than boys' work."

"Well, ma'am," says Bill, "what I've done hasn't been of much account, and I guess the boys would have figured it out without me, somehow, but I kinder wanted to give them a lift because I know what it is to puzzle over a job that I wasn't just used to, and I may want a lift from them some time, for I have got a little land down there, and I don't

know just how to manage, because I was not brought up on a farm. Now, you see, I have been wanting a hen-house myself down there, and I thought I couldn't afford to buy lumber to build it if times was so hard, and there I had lots of it better than this is built of, but I didn't know how to use it. But I have enough of it left, and I reckon I will build one for myself now, and the plan of this is worth more than my work, anyway."

"Well, William," said my mother, and I knew by the use of the Christian name that he was at last acknowledged as a neighbor, in the Scriptural meaning of the word, and that his kindness or his praise of her boys had overcome her dislike of his laziness, "I am very sure that you have helped very much, and if we can do anything for you, I hope you will not be afraid to ask for it, and we will try to be as willing as you have been to help the boys."

"There is a way, ma'am, that you might help me a great deal more, but I am a'most afraid to ask such a favor, only you speak so kind, and I know you feel kind. You see my wife was brought up to work in a factory, and she don't know so much about housework as she would if her mother had lived on a farm, though she used to tend a loom as well as any of them; but it was just killing her to work there, and I married her, and now if she could run up here once in a while and get you to show her about how to make such bread and pies and things as you make, and a little about fixing up clothes for herself and the little ones, it would do us a power of good, and I would be willing to do ten times as much as I have done for the boys. Fact is, ma'am, I know I aint just what I ought to be all the time, but I go home and find victuals spoilt by not being cooked right, and the old woman cross because clothes will wear out, and she don't know how to fix them decent again, and she knows I can't find money to buy new all the time, and she scolds, and then I swear, and likely enough go off to the tav-

ern and make a fool of myself, and that only makes things worse, and I have thought of it a lot since I have been at work here and seeing how busy these boys were, and pleasant about their work, and how neat and tidy their clothes are, though I'll warrant it does noi cost as much to dress all of 'em as it does for clothes for me."

And Bill shifted his feet uneasily and affected to be picking up nails from the ground, as he awaited a reply.

"Certainly, William, let her come up any time, and I will show her all I can, and help her about fixing up clothes for herself and the baby, and for you, too, and I may be able to find something that our children have outgrown that will do to make over for them and will piece out."

"Thank you, ma'am, very much. I will tell her, and I warrant she will be as pleased as if I had had another farm left me," and Bill hurried away with a suspicious moisture in his eyes, although he "whistled as he went" a gay dancing tune.

Do not smile, gentle reader, at this changing of works and giving away old clothes. Such friendly acts were the custom of that region, and served to keep alive good feeling among neighbors, who were thus drawn together until neighbors were almost as near as members of one family. After Bill had gone, mother and I went to the house, while the boys proceeded to throw gravel against the outer walls of the building until they had it banked up nearly three feet high on the north, east, and west, so as to be still more impervious to cold winds and rain.

During all this time our hens, of which we had about forty, had been giving us a liberal supply of eggs at the old henhouse, and a few days before Ned had announced that the speckled-necked one wanted to set, and Clarence gave orders for her to be left on the nest. To-night he found another setting and told Clarence of it at the supper-table.

"Just what I wanted, and how lucky, just as I was ready

for it. I am going to the squire's in the morning to get some of his Brahma eggs. I will carry over two dozen and a half of ours to change with him. They will do just as well for them to cook, and I want the Brahma chickens."

"You do not think of setting hens now, do you, Clarence? They will come off in March, and you cannot raise them in such cold weather."

"I could not in the old hen-house, but in the new one they will be almost as warm as in summer, and early chickens sell for such a great price that I hope it will pay well."

I petitioned for a chance to go with him; but as he said he must walk, for he did not dare to carry the eggs in a wagon over the frozen ground, for fear they would not hatch, and that he should be off by daylight, I did not care to avail myself of the permission which he so readily gave. That very night the nests in the new hen-house were made ready, by hollowing out two of those on the ground, lining them with cut-hay, and sifting a good handful of wood-ashes over them, as Clarence said, "to keep off the lice. Sulphur would be better, but I have not got it, and cannot get it short of the Corners. I think the ashes will do in this new building." Then the hens were brought up there and put on the nests and the nest-eggs put under them and the coops put before them to keep them from wandering away. This was done that they might get settled to their new nests before the precious eggs were put under them. Sure enough, Clarence was off by daylight in the morning, and returned before noon, with his basket of eggs, so little tired with his walk of ten miles that he went immediately at work on the piggery, somewhat to our surprise. But soon after noon one of the men that I had seen at Squire Grey's, at work, drove into the yard with two fine hogs in the team wagon, which he proceeded to unload into the sty, after knocking at the door and handing in a note for mother, which I will insert here that you may see the character of the man: —

STAFFORD, MASS., Feb. 8.

MRS. REYNOLDS: — I have sent over to Clarence two fine young sows, which I have scarcely room for in my piggery. They are both with pig, and I shall expect him to pay me twenty-five dollars for them when he sells the pigs, or I will take them back and pay him a dollar a week for keeping the two until they farrow, and after that a dollar and a half a week for four weeks, if he takes good care of them and feeds them well. They are at my risk until that time, so do not fear his running in debt. I should not have been in such hurry about getting them away, but it might hurt them to move them later. He has told me of his new hennery and his plans in regard to it, and I can pack up five dozen eggs each week and send over, that he may not have another such long walk, and you may send in return the same number of yours. I think I can pack them so they will hatch none the worse for the ride. I have also offered to take his calves when they are dropped, if he will bring them over to me at two days old, and give him in exchange heifer calves from my Alderney cows, full or half-blooded, which he can raise according to his own ideas. The calves from your cows will be worth more to me to raise for veal. The Alderneys are worth much more to make cows of, and I should raise them myself if I had a man that I could trust to take the pains with them that your boys will. Hoping and believing that those will achieve success who so richly deserve it,

I am yours respectfully,

JAMES GREY.

I could scarcely realize that we were to have pigs, Jersey calves, and Brahma chickens just as fine as those which I had admired at the squire's; but it was truly so, and yet the squire's letter read almost as if we were doing him a favor in receiving them. As soon as the man had driven away, I hurried out to look at the pigs. There they were, perhaps not much different from hundreds that I had seen, but they were our own, for, girl though I was, I was beginning to feel an interest in the out-of-door management of the farm which I had never felt before. They were yet in the outer yard, for they had so soon followed Clarence home that he had not finished his work on the piggery, but was sawing boards and fitting them in. He had fixed the trough so that he could shut the pigs away from it while he put in the food for them, and had

made a new plank (or slab) walk for them to come up on into the house from the yard, and had made the yard fence strong and tight, and when I asked what more he had to do, replied:

"Don't you see? They must be separated by and by, before they have their pigs, and I may as well get the boards all ready so I can do it at any time in a few minutes. By and by I shall be busy about something else, and shall not want to stop to fix this up. So I will get it all ready now; but I shall let them stay together until almost time for them to have their little pigs and then part them off."

So he had his partition all ready to put in, and then made a good bed of hay for them and let them in, and made a partition in the yard, all but nailing on two boards which he cut and laid by all ready. He was at some pains to take out a bottom rail which they would have had to step over, as he said it was very bad for them to have any such thing in their way, and he also put rails all around the inside of their sleeping-places about nine inches from the floor, and the same distance from the wall, because, he said, when they had little ones they were apt to lie down against the side of the pen, and when the pigs were small they would get caught between the mother and the board, and in that way get jammed so as to kill them. But if the rails were there the little pig would slip under the rail, and off out of the way, without being hurt. When I asked him how he knew so much about pigs, "By my reading, miss," was the answer I got, "and not because I was brought up amongst them."

And now we were fairly under way with the farming. We were not having much milk, as we were milking only one cow, for one was a heifer that had never had a calf, and the other two were to calve in April and were now dry. The heifer was one that father had traded for, and was not expected to calve until June, while the old cow, which was now giving milk, would calve in May. But we had hens setting in the new hen-house; more at the old one, giving us plenty of

eggs, for it was and had been all winter my task to give them corn and oats and scraps of meat and warm water several times a day, and I had carefully attended to it at first, because the egg-money was mother's from which she bought my boots and dresses, as well as her own, and I was desirous that there should be no lack, and since Clarence had taken charge, because I wished to help all I could to save our farm and make it pay.

And so the rest of the month passed without any events of especial importance, and so did most of March. The boys were busy preparing wood for the next year's use in stormy weather, while, when it was pleasant enough, they threw over the manure which was in the barn-yard into a large heap, that, as Clarence said, it might heat and get better fitted for use. He was so eager to increase the size of that heap that he cleaned up all the accumulation of the chip dirt in the wood-house and around the wood-pile out of doors, and added to it, and the dirt in the lane-way, for almost a foot deep was scraped up and put in with the rest; but I own I was hardly prepared, on going to call him to dinner one day to find that he had taken up the floor of the cow stable, and was throwing out the dirt from underneath, which Ned was wheeling to the heap.

"You see, sis," he said, "this has been under here for forty years, and lots of stuff has soaked through the floor cracks into it and in from the outside, and it is just as rich as it can be, and I am going to take it all out and fill it up with dry sand out of the sand-hill, and then get Bill Giles to help me put in some new sticks here and lay a new floor. This has got so rotten in some places that I am afraid it will break through and some of the cattle will get a broken leg, which will be a bad job for us. And that hole outside I shall fill up with sand or loam, so as not to have a mud-hole full of dirty water there all summer, as there has been every summer since I can remember."

CHAPTER VII.

All this time we had been looking for Mrs. Giles to come up to make us that call, and mother had planned what she would show her, and what she would give her; so, when Clarence, after supper, announced his intention of going down to see if he could get Bill to come up next day to help about fixing the barn floor, mother told him to ask her to come with him and spend the day with us, and he returned with the news that they would do so. And in the morning they came, Bill carrying the baby, a hearty-looking girl of a year old, and "Liza," as Bill called her, leading a boy of about three years. We had never seen Bill's wife and children, and I looked at them with some curiosity. She had on a faded dress of some woollen material, evidently cut and fitted for her by an experienced hand, but sewed by herself, or some one who had little skill with the needle. Seams were drawn and puckered out of all shape or into all shapes but the right one. Buttons were fastened on the front for ornament, but not for use, as no button-holes had been made to correspond, and pins fastened the front together. A cheap shawl of gay colors and an expensive bonnet of a style a year or two old, which looked as if it had been sat down upon more than once, were her outward adornments, while, upon their removal, a variety of cheap jewelry was displayed. The children were arrayed in a cheaper style of garments, the boy having a jacket which I thought had been presented to her by some one whose boy had outgrown it, and a pair of pants which she had evidently fashioned herself, judging by the cut and sewing of them, out of some cheap material. The pants and stockings did not meet, and the poor child's knees looked blue and half-frozen, at sight of which my mother could not

help exclaiming; a hat which she said was "like Bob's dog — his best dog, and all the dog he had," and a pair of good, stout shoes completed his outward attire, while the baby, a little to my surprise, had on a neat and pretty dress of calico. She explained this by informing us during the day that one of Bill's cousins, who came down to see them a few weeks ago, had made the dress and sent it to her. She told much the same story that Bill had told at the hen-house, and spoke of her deficiencies in a way that led us to hope that she would willingly learn better ways if she had an opportunity. As a consequence of her freedom in speaking, my mother spoke to her more freely in regard to the faults of her dress than she was in the habit of speaking to people about their faults. She showed her how she made her yeast of potatoes and flour, and put up a large bottle full for her to take home with her to start some with at home, also how the bread was made with it, and the milk-biscuits for tea. She also gave her a hint about the preparation of that staple New-England dinner, a "boiled dish" of beef and vegetables, and instructed her carefully in the art of making light molasses gingerbread, which we all thought was better than any kind of expensive cake. I thought, and still think, that my mother could make the best gingerbread I ever ate, and it was both cheap and wholesome, two things which are much in its favor. She showed her also about the faults in her sewing, and lectured her about those faulty seams, and the pinned dress without button-holes, almost as severely as she would have lectured me for the same faults. From some old bits of woollen clothes she cut some leggins to cover that boy's knees and thin stockings, and some mittens for his hands, and I was set to sewing them up, and putting buttons and button-holes to the leggins.

The boy was like most boys of his age, full of play and mischief, and I soon noticed that he did not mind her at all. If refused anything that he called for, it usually ended by

his setting up a yell that would not let us hear anything else until he received it, or got a passionate blow on the head that made the uproar worse for awhile. I think before night I received permission to visit the barn, which I had been longing to do all day, on purpose that my mother might point out to her some of the faults in the management of her children, for it was a different task to speak of those faults than to correct those which were confessed, and which Mrs. Giles had come to ask for instruction upon. But I am confident that what mother said was well received, and I hope it bore fruit in time, though firmness and patience, which were what she most lacked in governing her children, were not to be acquired in a moment, and even a three years' old boy or a babe in arms knows when they can conquer by persistence, as well as children of larger growth, and it would have taken long to eradicate from those children the memory of the many times when, by screaming and crying, they had forced the mother to yield to them.

At the barn I found everything going on well under Bill's directions. Several loads of earth had been taken out to add to the compost heap. New sticks had been put under the floor where the old ones had decayed, and in some places supported by stone walls built for that purpose. The stone was taken from the nearest wall, "for," said Clarence, "I can replace the wall when I plough in the spring better than I can stop to dig stones now." The floor was laid in such a way that the boys could easily take it up to put in the sand under it when they should be ready to do so, and before night it was finished, and some alterations made in the arrangements of the mangers from which the cattle and horse ate, so that they could be more easily cleaned out of all that the animals refused to eat, and also to bring them up nearer to the position in which a cow naturally stands, for although a cow feeds in the pasture with her nose level with her feet, she cannot do so as well when chained up by the neck. Rough but strong

partitions were put up between the heads of the animals to prevent them from stealing food from one another, and a plan for a place for the expected calves, upon the opposite side of the threshing floor, was contrived for the boys to fix on some rainy day, or when they were ready.

Before Bill and Liza went home mother offered to pay him for his day's work, for, she said, she could see the necessity of fixing the stable floors, and was willing to pay for it. "It is not like the hen-house work, which is an experiment of Clarence's, and I dare not risk money in experiments, if he risks his labor," she said. But Bill would not accept anything, saying that the bargain beforehand was that she was to teach Liza, and he was to work to pay for it. After a hearty supper, Clarence carried them home, and more than one bundle in the wagon besides, which mother had packed. Mother was saving, for she had learned to be so in the hard school of poverty, but she could give in consequence of it many things which were of value to the recipients greater than to herself. And, as I have said, such neighborly acts were current coin in Brookfield.

All this time the sitting of hens at the new hennery had been going on at such a rate that the squire's five dozen per week were not enough, although, at first, they gained upon us, and Clarence was obliged to send word that he could use more if he could have them. Every day the hens were taken off and the eggs examined, and if one was broken in any nest the rest were carefully washed in warm water and replaced in the nest. When the time approached for the first sitting to come off in a few days, they were sprinkled with water every day to soften the shell, and one morning I was invited up to examine our first Brahma chicks. There were twenty-six of them, one hen having hatched every egg, and the other eleven, all as white as the snow which lay on the ground outside. They were equally divided, and the nests carefully cleaned out and supplied with clean straw, and they were

left where they were. Luckily it was the last snow of the season, and was rapidly melting, and before night the boys had fixed a place out of doors in front of the hen-house (on the south side) very much like a hot-bed frame, where the hens were placed in coops and the chickens allowed to run out in little yards under glass, the remainder of Bill's windows being used to cover them. Here the next day the hens and chickens were removed after the sun came out bright, but at night were put back into their nests inside; and in this way was each successive lot taken out, in very warm days the sash being removed in whole or in part during the warmest part of the day to gradually accustom them to the air. After the first four hens had hatched, the rest, which had been set in pairs, were taken off two at a time and all the chickens placed under the care of one, while the other was carried back to the other hen-house, where she was soon laying again. When the coops were all filled, the oldest were turned out from under the glass, being then so large as to be in no danger from the weather, which by that time had in fact got quite warm. But before that time, mother and I had been called out to the piggery on two different mornings to see the little white pigs that were there, seven in one lot and eight in the other, and they were all doing well. And they ought to if care could make them thrive, for the boys visited piggery and hennery a dozen times every day, though their stops were always short, for they were busy all the time. And I was often with them, for I felt as much interest in the farming as if I had been a boy myself, and but little was done that I did not know about and know the reason of, if I could get them to explain it to me.

When the little pigs were about two weeks old there was a little calf at the barn, and I so much admired it that I regretted that we could not keep that and get the one from the squire's too, but when it was two days old the boys loaded it into the wagon and carried it off, bringing back when they

came another of about the same age, but much smaller and leaner-looking, in spite of its having come from one of the squire's fat cows. But it was pure Alderney, and its delicate fawn color and white, its fine head and large, beautiful eyes so much resembled my idea of a young deer that I was quickly reconciled to its lack of size. They fed it on new milk a few days, putting their hands into the pan of milk and letting it suck the finger. I was allowed, as an especial favor, to offer my finger for that purpose, but I soon found its teeth were so sharp that I was contented to look on without taking any active part. In a few days, however, it knew enough to drink the milk without the finger being in its mouth, and then a part sweet skimmed milk was substituted for the new milk, and when it was two weeks old it was having only skimmed milk, the skimmed being carefully warmed to the temperature of milk from the cow. But by that time another one was there, another change having been made with the squire, and the same process was gone through with for that, and more than that, there were two little lambs. They were each one of a pair of twins from the squire's sheep, and he said he had rather have one good lamb than two poor ones on one sheep, so he asked Clarence to take them away, telling him that they were easier to raise by hand than calves and were of his choicest breed of South Downs, which was why he preferred to keep only one on a sheep. How rich we felt! two calves, two lambs, fifteen pigs, and over an hundred chickens already, and many more in prospect.

Although the care of all this riches took up considerable time, the boys were busy ploughing and drawing out manure, and getting ready for planting; and mother and I had the care of the milk and making the butter. Clarence the last time he went to the squire's brought home a patent churn, which he had borrowed there, it being one that was not used because it was too small for his great dairy, but it was large enough for our four cows. With this, one of the boys would

churn in the morning before going to the field, saying it was nothing but fun beside the labor of our old dash-churn. The butter was light colored yet, but it showed the effects of the meal which Clarence was feeding, and we were willing to put it away for our own use, that we might have the more to sell when it got of better color, for we knew that yellow butter would sell better than white, even if they tasted just alike. And we were determined to allow ourselves nothing more than the comforts and necessaries of life until we were sure that we could do so without running in debt for them.

CHAPTER VIII.

By the first of May, Ned and I were obliged to go to school, where we pursued our accustomed studies. Ned, though usually fond of school, begged to be allowed to remain at home through the summer to help about the work, but this my mother would not listen to for a moment. But as they had ploughed the fields which were ploughed last year, and planted a part of the garden, and had drawn in the sand to fill the hole under the barn floor, and also that one in the barn-yard, and had drawn manure upon the two-acre lot, in the large field, across the road, where potatoes grew last year, making quite a hole in the large heap that Clarence was so proud of, Clarence also insisted that he could get along alone, or with a little help from Jake Wood, if Ned would only do all he could before school-time in the morning and after school was out at night. In this lot, the north end of "Field No. 6," Clarence intended to plant potatoes, and he had ploughed the manure under, but upon the three-acre lot, in the same field, he intended to put corn, and had ploughed before manuring, intending to spread the manure on the top and harrow it in, as he had read in some of the farming

papers, which he was always poring over in the evening, that that was the best way for corn. The eight-acre field of rye was looking very well. It was quite time the potatoes were planted and the manure drawn out on the cornfield, and Clarence went after Jake Wood to come and help him a few days if he could get him. A little to my mother's surprise, Jake made no objections at all to coming, merely saying that he should not want any pay for his work until fall, and then perhaps he should want something off the farm for a part of it. The boys had furrowed the potato field and had cut the potatoes for seed, evenings, when they could not do other work, and was all ready for the planting when Jake came in the morning. There were several barrels of wood-ashes in the cellar, and Jake and Clarence carried some of them out to the field, and Ned, before school, assisted in putting about a cupful in each hill as long as he could stay with them without being late at school. Jake had not deserted us all this time, but had called several times and inspected the operations of the boys, with which he was much pleased, and seemed to take much credit to himself for the encouragement which he had given to the plan at the first.

"I tell you, ma'am," said Jake, that evening at the supper-table, "I never see anything to beat it since I was born. Them pigs and chickens and calves are growing like all natur', and if there isn't a good crop of pertaters on that lot we have planted to-day, I never will guess again, for I was along here when they were carting the manure on there, and I never saw such lots of manure ploughed under in any field in Brookfield since I have lived here, which has been, man and boy, going on to sixty years, now. Seventy big loads, Clarence tells me; and then the ashes in the hill to kinder shove them along. I wouldn't wonder if there was more on that little lot this year than there was last year on the two lots. I want to help dig them just for the fun of seeing the big ones roll out; and if the boys don't keep the weeds out of it, I will come

and pull them out myself, for it takes as much manure to raise a big horse-weed as it does for a big pertater. And there is manure enough left to give the other field, where he calculates to put the corn, about as heavy a coat as the pertater field has got, which we will begin to draw out to-morrow."

"Then you have finished the potato field?" asked my mother.

"Well, I guess we have, ma'am. That boy can handle a hoe just about as handy as any man I ever worked with, and we haven't stopped to play about it, though he had to go off about a half dozen times to attend to the critters, but he was right back; and then Ned give us quite a lift in the morning and after school. Two boys like them chaps can do a heap of work when they set out, — and they work just as if they were playin'."

"And Jake says he can help me until I get the manure on the cornfield and get it planted, mother," said Clarence.

"Yes, ma'am," said Jake, "I can as well as not, for Rover and I have had a pretty good time in the woods lately, and it will do him good to lie side of the wall and watch for woodchucks awhile, and will give him a chance to think over his misbehavior."

"What," I asked in some surprise, "does Rover ever misbehave?"

"Well, I am almost ashamed to tell of it, and perhaps I ought not to as he never done sich a thing before, but you see, miss, I was down to the Corners yesterday, and there was a fellow there that I know, that had been into the tavern until he had got about 'how come ye so,' and he was out there front of the blacksmith shop talking and acting a little silly, I allow, and there was a gang of boys around him making fun of him. I felt bad for him, and I went by into the shop to get a trap fixed, just as if I hadn't seen him, and while I was in there I missed Rover, and I looked out and he

was actually among those boys a laughin' at that fellow as if it was something funny to see a man makin' a fool of himself, when the Almighty meant that he should have sense. And I just called Rover in and made him lie down, and I told him how much ashamed of him I was, 'cause he had had sorter decent bringing up, and ought to have known better than to laugh at a man that was in that shape. And I set out not to let him come with me to-day, only he begged so hard, and seemed to be so sorry."

Surely enough, as I glanced at the dog, he had his head down, with a sneaking look which I had never seen him have before.

"But," said my mother, "it seems to me the boys ought to have had a talking to more than the dog."

"Well, ma'am," said Jake, "I wasn't responsible for the boys; their fathers were there in the blacksmith shop, some of them, anyway, and they might let their boys act so if they had a mind to, but a dog that I had under my care shouldn't do it, if I knew it." And there was a twinkle in Jake's eye that told that his lecture to the dog was intended to have its influence upon the boys or their parents.

"It seems strange they do not shut up that liquor-shop at the tavern," said my mother.

"Well, you see the man that keeps it has got money, and is a strong politician, and lots of fellows vote just as he says, and his party don't want to trouble him for fear he would jine t'other side with all his votes. Then it isn't anybody's business in particular, and so everybody thinks somebody else ought to attend to it, and so it goes."

Clarence changed the conversation by asking how much seed-corn would be needed to plant the three acres.

"Well," said Jake, "you might as well shell three pecks or a bushel, though it won't take quite so much as that, maybe. Depends something how many kernels you put in the hill. I should put in five or six, and when it comes up, if

'twas too thick pull up one or two when I hoed it. I believe in having seed enough, and I hate to see places where there isn't anything growing, when it is manured as you manure your field. It 'pears to me like spreading a good dinner and not having folks to eat it, and so letting it go to waste. If you didn't put on more than Deacon Whiting does where he plants, it would do as well if more than half of it didn't come up. He puts about three loads to the acre, and then finds fault with the weather because the corn don't grow. Plants about twenty acres, and don't have corn enough to fat any critters decently. He wanted I should come to help him plant this week, but he treats a man that works for him just as he does his fields, and his critters, too, for that matter: gives them just as little as he dares to to feed on, and then gets all he can out of them; don't make a big bargain out of the fields and the critter at that, for 'tis plaguey little he gets, and he wouldn't get no great out of me, neither, if I was to work for him all the time. I told him one day at the store that there was more wasted on his farm than on any other two in Brookfield. You ought to have seen him stare at me. He wanted to know how that was, and I told him he wasted half his feed, for if he kept only one yoke of oxen instead of three, and three cows instead of a dozen, and gave them enough to eat, it would not take more than half as much to feed them as it did to feed the great drove he kept now, and he would get more milk and more work than he did now, and then he wasted half his work and more two, 'cause if he had manured a little field decently he could 'a raised as much on it as he did on the big lot he planted, without workin' half so much to take care of it. I tell you he was mad, and if he hadn't been a deacon, I expect I should have got a cussin', but all he said was, that 'I didn't know how hard farmers had to work when I was shackin' round in the woods:' just as if he thought it was nothing but fun to tote a gun all day through the woods and briers. I shouldn't have said what I

did, only I was thinking of the day before, when he wanted me to help him push a cord and a half of wood up the hill, that his three yoke of cattle had got stuck with. I helped him, of course, for I pitied the poor, hungry-looking critters; but if I had had him hitched to the cart tongue, I should have tried if a whip wouldn't have made him pull it. Last time I worked for him the dog didn't have a mouthful of dinner, but he and I went home to supper and I made it up to him. If a man can't feed my dog, I don't ask him to feed me, anyway."

And Jake shoved back from the table and began to cut tobacco for his pipe as savagely as if he were punishing the deacon for his neglect of the dog's wants. Luckily for my peace of mind, I knew that Rover had always been liberally fed when Jake had worked at our house, for my mother would not have allowed any animal to be hungry while she had plenty, however strong might be her prejudice against a poor man keeping a dog. But Jake's dog was looked upon more favorably than other dogs by her, for she knew that he contributed to the support of his master in hunting far more than the value of his feed. And it was Jake's only companion, and, as I heard him say once, "more company and better company for him than a lazy wife or saucy children." But when he said this he was returning from a call upon one of his friends, who was reputed to possess both those encumbrances; and Jake had gone there to help about some little job, and perhaps he had not received a very cordial reception from the wife. Jake never forgot a kindness nor forgave an insult. But the pipe was filled and lighted, and, under its soothing influence, he began again.

"What have you planted in the garden, Clarence? I see you had got part of it under way."

"I have put in some peas, two rows, and some sweet corn; that is all. The squire said when I was over last, that next time I came he would give me some currant bushes and

blackberries and gooseberry bushes that he was going to thin out of his, and perhaps some strawberry vines, and I want to put them in first and then see what room I have left. Shall have to plant more peas and two or three plantings of corn so as to have it green all summer, and then beans and cucumbers and such things. I don't remember what we used to plant first, and I meant to have asked you about it."

"I reckon you want to put in a few onions and beets and parsnips, don't you?"

"Yes, I shall want them and a few cabbages, too; but I haven't got the seed yet, and I didn't know if it was time to put them in, and I thought I would go down to the Corners some day when not too busy and buy some papers of such seed as I wanted."

"Now, don't you do that," said Jake; "but you just write to some of those seed fellows in Boston and tell them what you want, and send your money in the letter, enough to pay for them, and you will get your seeds a good deal cheaper, and better seeds, too, I allow, for I don't think no great of those little papers of seeds. Half the time they don't come up at all, whatever 's the reason for it. You can find the names of some of those chaps in your papers, most likely, and I will take your letter down to the Corners and give it to the stage-driver to-night, and you will get your seeds to-morrow night, and your change back."

So the address was found in the paper, and the order was written, Jake suggesting the amount, as a quarter pound of onion seed, same of beet-seed, cabbage, and parsnip, and mother furnished a five-dollar bill on the assurance of Jake that the right change would come back, and Jake departed for the Corners, and the boys and I went to shelling corn for planting, selecting only the handsomest ears and rejecting the kernels at each end of the ear, which Clarence said was always done. Next morning Jake came back commissioned to find out the price of the pigs and when they would be

ready to take away, as lots of fellows wanted to know. They were six weeks old a few days before, and Clarence was thinking that it was time to sell them, but no one had engaged any yet; but in consequence of Jake's endeavors I will now say that they were all sold in a few days at four dollars each. You can perhaps imagine how proud Clarence was when he placed sixty dollars in mother's hands, from which he was to take only the twenty-five to pay the squire for the hogs. That day was spent in drawing out manure upon the garden lot and the proposed cornfield. To make a finish of the garden, the drills for the peas were opened and the manure spread in them and covered with an inch or two of earth, upon which the peas were to be planted when it was time. On the side where the berries were to be put, about half an acre was left without manure, as Jake said what we put there would not bear that year, and as the ground was pretty rich, it would do best to manure them in the fall, which would make them bear next year. Of course, if manure had been more plenty they would not have been hurt by it; but manure could not be used where there would not be early return for it.

The next day was Saturday, and as the seeds came in the morning when Jake came, Ned and I were promised plenty of work. We raked the beds for the small seeds until they were so fine that we could get them no finer; and Jake and Clarence sowed them, even Jake being astonished at the quantity of ground it took to plant that amount of seeds upon, so much that I mistrusted he had not been much wiser than we were about the quantity we ought to have bought. "But, anyway," he said, "they are things that will sell if you have too many of them, and selling is what you want to be doing, I reckon. Some folks make a living just raisin' garden stuff to sell, and I have no doubt you could sell lots of it in Blackington, if it was only a little less work to get it there."

CHAPTER IX.

The next week the corn was finished, and the third calf was changed at the squire's, the money to pay for the pigs having been carried over to the squire's at the same time. When Clarence came back he brought a load of currant and gooseberry bushes, and blackberry and raspberry bushes, and strawberry vines, and even a few quince roots to be set at the lower end of the garden lot, all of which the squire had given him, which not only filled all the space which had been left for them, but encroached upon the rest of the garden. Many of the strawberry vines were set among the other stuff that was planted, avoiding carefully the hills where the other things were. As Jake said, "They wouldn't do any more hurt than so many weeds, and if folks hoe among stuff and don't kill weeds, I guess you can hoe your stuff and not kill the vines; and though I wouldn't give a cent for any of them but the currants, which are mighty good and wholesome, 'cause I can find blackberries enough in the woods, and the strawberries, too, though I don't think no great of them, but had rather have huckleberries; yet I know women mostly likes them, and if Miss Alice don't eat them all up they will sell fast enough."

But Clarence had another strange story to tell. The squire had advised him not to pay the money for the pigs, but to take it and enough more of the pig-money and buy a ton of some patent fertilizer, a sort of superphosphate that he had tried and liked, and plough up the fore-acre lot back of the barn, which didn't bear much grass and put corn on half of it — not field-corn such as he had been planting, but corn sowed in rows about as thick as it could grow, for the sake of the fodder, which, the squire said, could be fed to the cows green

when the pasture got poor, or kept to cure and feed during the winter, if it was not needed before. And, then, in June, ruta-baga turnips could be put on about another acre, and some of them could be sold for a good price in Blackington, no doubt, while what were not sold would be the best possible feed for the cows and calves and sheep during the winter. And having learned the amount of cabbage-seed that had been sowed in the garden, he advised also setting cabbages, as far as he had plants for, at the lower end of it; while the turnips, being sowed last, would fill the space between the corn and cabbage. It seemed like a desperate venture to my mother to pay fifty-five dollars for manure for the sake of raising crops of which she knew nothing; but Clarence was manager now, she said, and if he and the squire thought best, and he thought he could take care of so much, she had no objections to make. He had had such good luck with his pigs and was doing so well with his chickens, that she felt as if the money was his. And Clarence sent for the manure and the turnip-seed and began ploughing the field. He also decided not to fatten his old hogs that summer, but to raise more pigs in the fall. And so the work went bravely on.

I have lingered over the tale of these early days, for they are vividly impressed upon my mind. I was so deeply interested in every move that was made, and so proud of all that promised to be successful about them, that I think I shall never forget any of them, and, girl though I was, I was glad to help about them. When at home from school, morning or evening or on a holiday, I was sure to be out at work with my brothers, if I was not absolutely needed in the house, and if I had any duties in the house I hurried to perform them, that I might get out. Eliza Giles had made one or two calls upon mother to obtain information about her work, which she found a little difficult, especially the making of garments for herself and the children and shirts for Bill, he having obtained a steady job at his trade, by which he was

able again to purchase material for her to work upon; and as she had learned to sew a seam decently, they were better clad than when I first made their acquaintance, and if she still kept her cheap jewelry she did not wear it when she came to see mother. Bill was at home a few days in July and came up to see if he could be of any assistance. Clarence was haying then, with Jake to help him. Bill could not handle a scythe, but he could help take care of the hay, and he also found time to trim the old apple trees around the house. Jake's assistance had not been needed between the time of the corn planting and setting out the small fruits until haying. The boys had done the hoeing alone, or rather with the help of the horse, for Clarence went over it all with the horse and plough nearly once a week, which made the labor of hand-hoeing very light. The cabbages the boys had transplanted at odd jobs in rainy days and at morning and evening when it did not seem too hot for them to live, and if I was as astonished at the ground which it took to plant the seed on, I was more so at the number of plants which they produced. There was over an acre of them, numbering more than five thousand plants. There was also a little more than an acre of turnips, and the rest in sowed corn. The fourth and last calf had come and been changed in June, and the four calves and two lambs were doing finely. They had long since learned to drink their milk without warming much, and the three oldest would not refuse it even if slightly sour. We had four cows to make butter from, and were making a fine lot of it, which was readily purchased at the store at the Corners for twenty-five cents a pound, and after the heifer calved, which was early in June (the calf which we got for hers was a week old, and was put on skimmed milk the third day after we got it home), we made about forty pounds a week. But we had good cows, and they had good feed and good care. The hens had laid eggs enough to keep us in our little supply of flour and sugar and molasses and tea, which was about all we needed at the

store, and mother rejoiced at the rapidity with which the balance to her credit was gaining at the store. It almost reconciled her to spending of the money which had been taken for the superphosphate. But in June an event happened which gave us all much pleasure. One day a man knocked at the door and inquired if Mrs. Reynolds lived there. Being informed that that was the place and the person, he said, —

"My business is buying up live fowls and chickens, which I dress and send to Boston, and Bill Giles told me he thought I could get some here."

"You can see my son; he is in that field hoeing and he has charge of the fowl," said mother.

We soon saw Clarence going to the hen-house with him, and, after a short time, they came down loaded with chickens, which were weighed and put in the wagon, and Clarence came in with a handful of money, which he put in mother's lap, saying, —

"He bought fifty of the largest chickens at a dollar apiece, and paid for them, and he is coming every week or two after more, and will pay all they are worth, he says. Just think of that! and I have got now over four hundred left. I shall not sell any more of my early pullets, as the price will soon be down, and I mean to keep about a hundred here next winter, and as many at the old hen-house as we had there last winter, and shall sell off the old hens down there. The man says the time to sell the old hens will be when they lay their litters out and want to sit again. Then they will be fat and heavy."

"Do as you think best about it, my son, for I begin to think you know better than I do. But I would like to have you go over now and pay the squire for his hogs, and have that settled," which was done one evening after work, for the day time was precious.

The haying was finished early in July and the hoeing and weeding took up much time after that. It seemed to me that

I never saw things grow so rapidly. The little garden had yielded bountifully, giving peas and beans and corn and other vegetables, some of which appeared on our table every day, to the manifest saving of flour and meat, and we had also been able to contribute from our abundance to the tables of Mrs. Giles and other neighbors, who had not such gardens as we had, though many of them might have had if they would have planted it, but they had not time or manure to spare from the corn and potatoes. Clarence said that he had little relish for giving to such people; but we had a plenty, and there was no sale for it unless it was carried to Blackington, and we thought the time to go there and sell it was worth as much as it would sell for. The man who bought the chickens did buy some things from the garden almost every time he came round, to take home for his own use, paying for it the prices which he said he would have had to pay at home, which made Clarence think that it might be well to plant more such garden stuff another year and try to sell it himself in Blackington.

Perhaps you have wondered ere this if we had no neighbors but Jake and the Giles family. Indeed, we had plenty, and some of them very kind, too, but thus far they had nothing to do with my story, and I have preferred to present only those who were absolutely necessary to a fair relation of the events which so closely followed one another in this, to us at least, eventful year. Our nearest neighbor was also our relative, — Uncle Thomas Reynolds; but we saw but little of him, and heard but little from him when we saw him, or when we did not. He was one of those unfortunate men, who are, I believe, most rare among New England farmers, a hen-pecked husband, whose greatest misfortune was having a very smart wife. He had a better farm than ours, or at least better land and better buildings, which had not been built near as long as ours, and he worked hard all summer cultivating his land, much in the same way that our father had cultivated his

farm while living,— making a little manure go a great ways and a great deal of work produce only small crops. In the winter he made a few boots for Blackington people and done little jobs at cobbling for the neighbors, working early and late at all seasons, but in the slow, spiritless manner of a tired and discouraged man. His wife was a very prudent, saving sort of woman, who worked hard herself, as it would seem, from sheer restlessness and inability to keep still, and drove every one else to work too, with a merciless energy that knew no tiring. But with all this they were not prosperous. There was always an unbalanced account at the store, and the mortage upon the farm, which had been put on when the buildings were built, was no smaller than it had been ten years ago; nay, it was larger, for the interest had not been paid for some years. It was a mystery to many people why Uncle Thomas did not get along better, as busily as he worked, and as prudent, yes more than prudent, stingy as was his wife. It was many years before I knew why it was; but I may as well tell it now. It was not owing to his bad habits, for he had none, unless the indulgence in very small crumbs of tobacco daily could be counted as such; nor was it mismanagement of the farm on his part, or household extravagance on hers (that could never be charged upon her), and many who managed their farms no better than Uncle Thomas still accumulated slowly. But every cent of money that Aunt Cynthia could get hold of (and she managed to get hold of many during the year) was carefully hoarded and was never seen again in that household. She was actually robbing her husband, keeping him at work under a load of debt all the time and denying herself and the family all the comforts of life, for the sake of hoarding away money.

I think Uncle Thomas never knew how it was, or realized what a leak it made in his income, though he might have had an idea that Cynthia had an hundred dollars or so stowed away. Whether he would have been more than

astonished, — whether he would have dared to assert his rights if he had known what we learned after his death, that, during the time when he was struggling to support his family, and bearing the misery of a debt which he saw no means of discharging, she had managed to hoard up over two thousand dollars, a sum which would have seemed like a fortune to him, — I know not, nor can any one. Now, do not think this is a fancy-sketch, or an exaggeration, for I have heard the woman who did this, boast after her husband's death, of the money she put away, which he knew nothing about, and tell how she managed to do it. Nor was it from any cause but the simple love of hoarding, for after his death every debt was scrupulouly paid, no one being wronged by her but her husband, who was robbed, not of money alone, but of the rest, the freedom from care, and the home comforts which would have made easy the remnant of his worn-out life, wasted in trying to fill the bottomless pit of a heartless woman's avarice.

They had three children, as did my father, two boys and a girl, although much older than my brothers and myself. The oldest son, Thomas, Jr., had run away from home at sixteen, and gone to sea. For a few years letters used to come from him to an old school-mate, which always contained some message for his father, and sometimes small remittances of money, but for ten years nothing had been heard from him. The daughter was next, and she had married young, luckily getting a smart young man of good habits, and one who obtained good pay, which was spent as fast as earned, for she was as eager for luxury and show as her mother was adverse to it.

I think her mother mourned over this more than she did over the youngest son, who, from a smart, clever boy, had sunk to an idle, drunken vagabond, working only enough to supply his hunger and thirst. With Uncle Thomas and Aunt Cynthia we had never been intimate, and we were not

likely to be now, though there never had been any quarrel; but my mother despised Aunt Cynthia, and despised Uncle Thomas for being under her dominion. She had called upon us just after Clarence bought the superphosphate, on purpose, it seemed to me, to denounce such extravagance, and predict that we should end in the poor-house, an interference that my mother resented as much as (perhaps more) than if the buying of the manure had been her plan instead of Clarence's. It is the way with some women, that when they have yielded their judgment to that of husband or son, they cannot bear to hear any one else question the wisdom of that judgment. From opponents they become earnest champions. It may be so with some men, but I never noticed it in them.

Not far below them lived a curious family, consisting of an old lady about eighty years of age, Mrs. Butts, and her two daughters of about sixty years of age and unmarried, of whom the mother always spoke as if they were "nothing but flighty young gals," and with whom and at whom she jested about the beaux who came or did not come to see them, — jests not always refined, but yet not actually vulgar; at least in my hearing. There was no man upon the place, which was but a small one, with a little, tumbledown house upon it so ancient that it looked as if it must have been, as it was said to be, the oldest house in Brookfield.

They had each one a little money saved, a few hundred dollars, very few, and they calculated that the interest and the principal at the rate which it cost them to live, would be enough to keep them until they were an hundred years old, and so they sat knitting by the fire-place — they could never be persuaded to have a stove in the house — as coseyly and comfortable as if they were above all fear of want and sickness. The old lady kept a cow and a dozen or so of hens all the time, and fatted a pig every season, the daughters taking the care of them in consideration of stipulated

amounts of milk, eggs, and pork, for, strange as it may seem, although all lived in one room and all cooked by the same fire, each one kept her own provisions and cooked and ate as separately as if in different houses; social and neighborly together always, but independent of each other as much as can be among neighbors. The cost of keeping the fire, of planting the little garden, and even the labor of taking care of the rooms which they occupied, was divided upon equitable principles and rules, which were never deviated from.

I used to enjoy going in there and listening to their talk and looking at the old-fashioned things with which the house was furnished. I even stayed there to take tea with them, and, as my visit was paid to them all, I had to eat with each one: a bit from this one's bread, and then another from each of the others; a small bit of cake and a small wedge of pie from each corner of the table — for we all ate at one table — was passed to me, and I was invited to decide which was best, a matter in which I could not venture an opinion, luckily for me, if I desired to stand well in the good graces of all three. They eked out their slender income by their knitting, which they were always doing, and by occasionally taking in for the night some tin peddler or other traveller, who preferred their humble accommodations to the more expensive, but scarcely more palatable fare to be found at the hotel. This was the exclusive perquisite of the old lady, who never turned away one who applied, only stipulating, if he had a horse, that he must take care of him himself. Upon such occasions she and her guest ate at one table and the girls at another.

These people have little to do with my story, but they hold a large place in my memory of my girlhood days, and I introduce them to you as people whom you may like to know about, if not to know intimately. Beyond their house was a strip of wood, and in the clearing beyond was the town almshouse, where old Tom Hardy had been keeper for

many years, for although a few, like my Aunt Cynthia, grumbled because the paupers were allowed to live so well, yet the majority were pleased to know that they had good food and good care, and were satisfied with the way in which the farm belonging to the town was managed by him, which, indeed, was so prudently done that but little money was needed "for the support of town's poor" at each town meeting. Uncle Tom, as everybody called him, was another odd character. Small in size and quick in his motions, his tongue would outrun any woman's in the town, and yet he never stopped work to talk, nor stopped talking to work.

If any one met him on the road, Uncle Tom would begin conversation as soon as they came within hailing distance and keep it up until they got out of sight and hearing. He talked to the inmates of his boarding-house, as he called it; he talked to the horse and oxen, and I think, even to the cart and plough. He could scold, too, and did scold, though the funny twinkle of his eyes under their shaggy brows gave the lie to his professions of anger. His wife was as different from him as could be, — fat, heavy, slow-motioned, though making every step count so well that she did as much work as more bustling women. Speaking seldom, and in a moderate way that was almost a drawl, with no stronger expression of anger than "Now, Thomas," she yet ruled with a firmer hand indoors than Uncle Tom did out of doors, and yet those under her charge felt both respect and love for "Mother Hardy," as they all called her, though most of them were old enough to be mother to her.

Uncle Tom always went to church every Sabbath morning, where he regularly slept through the morning services, as I thought, because he could not bear to hear another man talk when he could not, or perhaps the unusual silence of his tongue acted as a soporific. His wife came in the afternoon, and sat bolt upright and wide awake, as if to make up for Uncle Tom's sleepiness. We saw but little of them, for he

only left the farm for church or business, she only for church; but he came up and bought four of Clarence's pigs one day, His first salutation as he drove into the yard was, —

"Well, widder Reynolds, I thought I would come up and see if you wasn't coming down to board with me afore long. Yer sister Cynthia said as how she reckoned you'd have to pretty soon, but I don't see any signs of yer gettin' ready this summer, in the way things look around here. Where's the boy? I want to look at some of them pigs of his'n, and if they are as good as Jake tells for, I maybe will take some of them out of the way so as to save you from havin' to feed so many. Pesky handsome calves them you has under the apple trees, and them little lambs, too; reckon them come from the squire's. See you have got a swad of chickens up on the hill, and I guess them pay, too. Shouldn't wonder if you made a pretty good thing this year, from what I hear and see, and I am glad of it. Here comes the boy, and now I'll look at them pigs of yourn, young sir. Come down to see us some day, ma'am, the old woman 'll be proper glad to see you if I tell her you ain't coming to board with us, and you can look around and see what you think of our accommodations," and he was off to the piggery talking to Clarence all the time without giving him any more chance to reply than he had my mother, and when he drove off he was still talking to Clarence and the hogs and horse alternately, until he was out of hearing.

Do not imagine, that, if there had seemed any danger of our having to go to the almshouse that Uncle Tom would have hinted at it until it became a necessity, but as long as we appeared to be prospering, it was to him an excellant joke.

CHAPTER X.

When the haying was finished and the hoeing going on, the squire and Aunt Matilda drove over one afternoon, and the squire and Clarence spent some time walking over the farm. Before they went out mother expressed a hope that the squire would not urge Clarence into any more experiments until he was better able to carry them out; but she could obtain only a promise not to recommend anything which he did not think would pay well. He was much pleased with the result of his previous advice in regard to the field of corn-fodder, turnips, and cabbages, and said Clarence would make an hundred dollars on that field after paying for labor and manure. The hen-house and the barn were carefully examined, as he had never seen the former; and, in fact, all the details of the farming were inspected.

When they returned, he expressed himself as more than satisfied with the work that had been done, and said that he had planned a few more improvements which would prove paying investments, and would not cost much besides the labor, not more than Clarence's pig and chicken money, now amounting to more than an hundred dollars, would pay. I think mother would have scarcely agreed to the spending of even that if it had not been for the recollection of the butter money at the store, which was also quite a sum, more than sufficient for the payment of interest and taxes. As it was she gave her consent, saying that Clarence had done well so far under the squire's advice, and she should let them do as they pleased, only she hoped they would be careful.

As a result, Clarence was soon engaged in drawing home boards from the sawmill, selecting such as he wanted for his work, most of them being left in the field between the corn

and potatoes. Then, as it was very dry weather, a deep furrow was ploughed through the lowest part of the grass-land, running several times along in the furrow to get as deep as possible. Then Jake and an Irishman, one Mike Murphy, came on and began to ditch along the line of the furrow, digging about three feet deep, and a little more than a foot wide, and going to hard-pan, as they call it, all of the way. This main ditch ran from the road down to the pond, and several short ditches branched from it into the wettest places in the meadow.

While they were digging, Clarence made V-shaped troughs, which he put into the bottom of the ditches, and covered with other boards. Not much pains was taken with making or laying the troughs, excepting to see that they were put with the tight edge at the bottom, and that they were so put that it was down hill all the way from road to pond.

When all were laid, stones were put in them of such size as to leave a few inches of space in the troughs under the stones, which also stuck up above the troughs a little way. Upon these, covering-boards, a little wider than the top of the troughs, were laid to keep the dirt out of the troughs, while the water could easily find its way among the stones and along the troughs. Then the dirt was filled in again upon these boards, and the sods carefully replaced, but to make sure of grass, where the sods were broken, a few pounds of grass-seed were sown along the ditches.

Then Clarence and Mike went to drawing mud from the pond, which was unusually low at that time, owing to the owner of the mill below repairing something, which made it necessary for them to let the water out of the pond for that purpose. Some fifty loads were put into the barn-yard, and ten into the hog-yard; and the rest, about five hundred more, being put in heaps in the pasture near where it was drawn out. It was a large amount, but Clarence said it would keep growing better for use by being exposed to the weather for

some years, and he did not know when the pond would be so low again to give him so good a chance. The eight-acre field, from which the rye had been taken, was also ploughed again, the rye, stubble, and weeds being turned under, and we were surprised to see two tons of phosphate arrive which was to be put on there. Clarence explained by saying that the squire had offered to find the phosphate, and take the rye-straw or the money in payment for it, just as Clarence might choose, which would give him the rye for his labor and get the field into grass at the same time.

By this time the harvesting was nearly ready to commence upon. One evening Jake came in, and after the customary salutations he said, —

"I'm afraid, Master Clarence, I shan't be able to help you dig those pertaters, as I wanted to. I really wanted to see them turn out, but I have struck a new job that I calculate will last me two or three weeks."

We looked up in surprise at the idea of Jake sticking to one job so long as that, and Clarence asked, "What is it?"

"Well, I will tell you all about it, but I must begin at the beginning. You see Rover and I had been out hunting the other day, and when I was coming back I stopped at the tavern. When I went in I saw a woman and a little gal on the piazza, she sewing, and the little one at play. Well, when I came out I stopped a minute, and the little one came up to me and began to talk to me, and I was answering her questions, when the woman called her back. Perhaps she thought the child bothered me, but it didn't, for I like little gals till they begin to get their heads full of nonsense about beaus and sich things, or may be she thought I was too rough-looking like for the little gal to speak to; but I straightened up and took off my hat, and I says to her, 'Suffer little children to come unto me and forbid them not.' [You may think, reader of these pages, that this sounded irreverent, but if you could have seen and heard Jake as he uttered them, you

would have known that he loved little children with a love that could have been surpassed only by the love of Him who first uttered those words, and that he spoke them without any thought of irreverence, but with deeper reverence than that of many who quote the words of that Great Book oftener than he did. Nor was there thought of comparison of himself and the Author of those words, other than the comparison of that love which was common to both.] And then I heard somebody laughing, and two or three men came out of the parlor just back of me, and one of them, which was the little gal's father, called her to him, and seein' the gun and the game-bag, begun to ask about the huntin' and fishing, and finally said that he and his brother and his wife's brother, who were with him, had come down on purpose to hunt and fish, and they wanted to hire me to show them around to the best places that I knew of, and they would give me a dollar apiece every day, and I might have all I got myself besides; and so I'm going with them, which is a pretty good job for old Jake."

"I am glad that you are so lucky," said Clarence, "and if I need help I can get Mike a few days again, I think."

"Well, then, half my errand is disposed of, and now for the rest of it. You see, ma'am, where we stopped for a lunch to-day the men were saying that they didn't like the tavern very well. It is kinder lonesome like for the woman when they are off in the woods, 'cause there ain't any women folks there, only Mrs. Gannett and the gals in the kitchen, and I guess if she went there and sot down while they were cooking she wouldn't have much relish for her dinner when it was ready. And, then, sometimes, there is a gang of rather rough men around there, and I allow she don't like that, and so they wanted to know if I couldn't find them a chance to stay at some farm-house two or three weeks; and I told them I didn't know, but I would see what I could do, and let them know to-morrow, for I thought of you, and I knew you had room

enough, and that if any place could suit them around here you could; and they pay five dollars a day at the tavern for four of them and the two children (one of them a baby about two years old) and they said that they would be glad to pay the same or more if necessary at some private house."

And Jake wiped the perspiration from his brow in a way that showed plainly that he had dreaded proposing such a thing to my mother. It was then looked upon in Brookfield as something of a come-down for a farmer's wife to take boarders (unless it was the district school-teacher), a greater departure from a life of independence than letting her daughters go out to do housework in some nice family, which was quite a matter of course when there were more girls than were needed to assist their mother about household labors. Already Clarence began to object.

"Mother does not need to take any boarders, Jake; she has enough to do already, and I shall make enough to support us without her doing any more than she does now."

"Wait a moment, my son," said mother; "I would like to accommodate your acquaintances, Jacob, but I am afraid that I should not have things nice enough to suit them. We live in a plain style to what they are used to, I suppose."

"If style was what they wanted, ma'am, they might have stayed at home; what they want is just to have things clean and wholesome, which I know they always are here, and that the woman should have a quiet place to stay when they are out with me, and a body to speak a civil word to once in a while when she feels like it. And they are quiet, decent sort of folks; don't drink, though two of them smoke, and maybe the smell of their good cigars would put you out of the conceit of Jake's old pipe. But if you won't take them in, I reckon they won't stay long, and so I shall lose my job," and having put it on that ground of a personal favor to himself, he seemed to be willing to rest his case there, at if he thought that would have more influence than the promise of money.

And perhaps it had, for we felt indebted to Jake for past kindness, and he knew that he had offered us this, because he thought it would prove a welcome addition to our income, as indeed it would be. Clarence was about to make further objections, but my mother silenced him with a motion of her hand, and said, —

"Well, Jacob, if you think they could be satisfied with our accommodations, I am willing to try what I can to suit them. I don't feel as if I ought to let such a chance to help a little pass by while the children are doing so much. I will try to get the rooms ready to-morrow, and you may tell them they can come when they are ready after that."

"Well, ma'am, you have done me a favor, and it's a favor to them, too, and I hope what they pay will pay for your work as well as for the victuals," and having got the errand off his mind, Jake chatted a while about the crops and the calves and chickens, and then took his departure.

In the morning we began in good season to prepare for our boarders, by getting the "best room" in order, swept and dusted, and with clean curtains, before going upstairs to work in the chambers; and it was well that we did, for we had scarcely begun when Jake came again and announced that the people were on the way.

"Yer see, there was a rather noisy time at the tavern last night, and this morning the lady got up and said she would not stay there another night, for she couldn't sleep nor the children neither, and if I hadn'nt got there about as early as I did, I don't know but they would have started for home afore this time; but when I said you had decided to take them, she said she was coming right down here, and if you would not take her now, she would wait under the apple-tree until you was ready for them; and so I said I would come on ahead and let you know just how it was, and I guessed you would let them in if it did put you out a little. So they will be here in a few minutes, and when the woman and babies

are inside I'll take the men off into the woods, and they shan't bother you before supper-time, I'll warrant, for I'll take them down to Black Brook to-day."

It was no small inconvenience to my mother to have them come that morning, when she had to get the chambers ready and cook the dinner, without more notice, but all she said was, "Just like a man; you think I can get ready for anything as easy as you can get ready to go gunning." But soon the wagon from the tavern was at the door and unloaded three men, a lady, and two children, and their baggage. One of the men advanced and introduced himself as Mr. Ralph Benson, and his wife as Mrs. Benson; he apologized handsomely for coming before the time appointed, and giving the same reason that Jake had given, expressed a hope that she would not refuse to admit them.

Of course my mother said that it made no difference to her, but that they must excuse whatever was not in readiness for them, and all that was not as fine as they were used to; but a few words from Mrs. Benson quickly placed her at ease. Then the other two gentlemen were brought forward and introduced as Mr. George Benson and Mr. Henry Farnham, and the trunks were brought in, and Jake, according to promise, hurried the gentlemen off into the fields, just calling out that they were not to be expected before night.

Before they went Mr. Benson brought forward some partridges, the trophies of yesterday's hunting, which he requested my mother to be so kind as to cook, as they expected to have hunter's appetites at supper-time. And I may as well say now that the game and fish which they brought in from their hunting was no small addition to our table while they were there, although they often sent off parcels of it as presents to friends in the city, for they were hunting, not as Jake did, for a living, but for pleasure and health.

Allow me to describe our boarders, for the appearance of people is often to me an index to their character, sufficient

to incline me to like or dislike them. I took a liking to them when they came forward, which I think was not all the result of fine clothing nor polite manners, nor even of that five dollars per day which was promised, though for the sake of that, I would have endured, if I had not liked much less agreeable persons.

Mr. Benson was tall, dark-complexioned, with dark eyes and a black, silky beard, which he wore full around the mouth; quick and pleasant spoken, and with a free-and-easy way that showed he felt at home in any society, though then and ever afterwards as tenderly respectful to my mother and all of us as if we had been the proudest ladies in the land. In talking with Jake there was no appearance of superiority nor of condescension, which Jake would not have borne, nor yet any attempt to patronize, but just such a way as fell in with Jake's humor exactly, giving directions, as the man who employed another had a right to do, but with an air of yielding details to one who understood the matter in hand better than he did. And as he treated Jake, so he did every one with whom he dealt. He knew what he wanted done, but how best to do it was the business of the man who had the work to do.

His wife was a contrast in looks, being small, slightly built, and light-haired, with blue eyes, and a complexion almost too fair to be healthy. She was as perfectly lady-like as he was gentleman-like, but she had not his power of making acquaintance rapidly, nor of adapting herself to the society of those she met that he had. Add to this a strong will, veiled under a gentle manner, and a quick temper, usually under perfect control, and you have Mrs. Benson.

The oldest child, a girl of six years, was not shy or reserved with strangers unless she happened to take a dislike to them, but she was apt to resent too rapid advances from those whom she did not know, and thus those who tried to "scrape acquaintance" with her seldom succeeded. She

seemed almost wild at being in the country, and had examined pigs, chickens, calves, and lambs before night, having first asked permission to visit them. She was perfectly fearless, and yet cautious about venturing too far until she had assured herself of the lack of danger, or if there was danger, of the best way to face it. She had the fair complexion of her mother and the brown eyes of her father.

The baby was a pretty two-year old boy, looking like his father, and with a most imperious will and temper of his own, which made him rather troublesome.

George Benson was like his brother in looks but that he wore his beard only on his cheeks, in English fashion, and he was moderate in speech, and seemed as if he seldom cared to talk for the sake of talking or of pleasing. Did not laugh as often or as heartily as his elder brother.

Mrs. Benson's brother, Henry Farnham, was a quiet lad of about sixteen, who would rather have stayed in some cool place with a book in his hand than to have shot all the partridges or caught all the trout in Brookfield, yet it was he who usually brought home the most game after the first week. The expedition to the woods had been undertaken mostly upon his account, as it was feared that too close confinement to his studies had injured his health. About the same age as Clarence, he overtopped him by a head, but my brother looked much the strongest, though he was not. Clarence might have endured the longest, for he had the muscles of a farmer, but Henry had the muscles of a trained gymnast.

When the men had departed, mother and I were obliged to let Mrs. Benson entertain herself and the children in the parlor or out under the apple trees as best she might, while we made ready the dinner and the chambers, and we saw but little of her excepting when our duties called us into the room where she was, or she came to us to ask permission to go out and make the acquaintance of the animals and places out of doors. She spent much of the afternoon in the field

where the boys were at work, and when they came up at night Clarence was talking to Mrs. Benson as quietly as if he had always known her, while little Jessie was seated on Ned's shoulder.

Soon the hunters returned, and after supper Mr. Benson came out and asked permission to spend the evening in our sitting-room saying that it was more pleasant to them to do so than to stay in a room by themselves, adding, —

"George is too lazy to talk to us and Henry too tired, or else he is looking for a book, while Jessie wants to be with the boy that owns those little lambs, so we may as well all come out."

Having been welcomed, he continued: —

"I consider that we are most fortunate, Mrs. Reynolds, in having fallen in with your friend, Jake. He is the best hunter and guide in these woods that I could have found, I think, for he knows every place to find the game, and the easiest way to get to it, and the shortest way home after we get through hunting; and he knows all sorts of birds, if not every individual bird that we have seen; can tell where they build and how, and all their habits; and every tree and plant, and just what it is good for, and I know not how much more, besides being such an original character in his speech that I take more pleasure in hearing him talk than in hunting."

"He is called a great hunter, I know," said my mother, "and ought to know the woods and all that is in them, for he has almost spent his life there."

"But he seems to be a man of good sense and good judgment in other things, though not like a man who has learned by his reading."

"But Jake is a great reader when at home," said Clarence; "takes two or three newspapers, and has got a lot of queer books that nobody else ever reads, with all sorts of queer information in them, besides old histories and such things, that

he studies over and over again. He is just as odd in his reading as in everything else."

"His way of talking is not like that of a great reader," said George Benson.

"That is partly a matter of habit," said my mother, "and partly from a dislike to the style of most book writers, for he would think it an expression of contempt to tell him that he talked 'like a book.'"

"If what he knows about the woods and what is in them was put into a book it would make a very interesting one, and I would like to own it," said Henry Farnham.

"I know I am under great obligations to him for finding us a boarding-place away from that miserable hotel," said Mrs. Benson.

"I know I like him, and that's enough," said Jessie, with a grave nod, as if to say that that settled the matter, as indeed it did so far as all further discussion of Jake for that night was concerned, for after a laugh at her grave assertion, the conversation changed.

I think that in the course of the evening they managed to obtain from Clarence a clear statement of what he had done upon the farm, and some idea of what he intended to do. I remember a remark which Mr. Benson made during the evening, which made a deep impression on my mind, as it also did upon that of the others: "In the city we think, even those who are rich, that we cannot afford to keep property unless we expect to derive either pleasure or profit from it; but the farmers here, many of them, keep property from which they derive no profit and no pleasure that I can understand; paying taxes on land which produces nothing, and some of which only helps to hold the world together, and if they can get a dollar ahead, buying more land of the same sort, instead of trying to make that better which they have, not noticing what I notice, that those who have small farms often produce more than those who have large farms. All

the land that I have seen about here might be made to produce four times as much as it does now, and some of that which now produces nothing is capable of being made as good as the best. If you make it your standard to bring all your farm up to the condition of the best, and the best up to four times its present producing power, you will not go far wrong, young man, and nothing but sickness and accident will hinder you from being successful."

"That is just what I mean to do, but I must spend money to do it, and I must earn it before I can spend it," answered Clarence.

Before we retired that night, Mr. Benson insisted upon paying to mother a week's board in advance, although she told him that she was not in a hurry for it.

Next day the hen-dealer came after more chickens, and another man came with him who bargained with Clarence for all his cabbages, turnips, and potatoes that he would have to sell, at a certain price per bushel or hundred weight, and also for the onions and beets in the garden, he agreeing to come after them as he wanted them, and pay for them as he took them, for it was his business to sell them in Blackington and other villages. The price was satisfactory to Clarence, who had dreaded the business of selling them, not only because he had little liking for peddling from house to house among strangers, but because of the time it would take from other work which he had planned. Then Mike was hired and the corn cut and stooked in the field. Then the sowed corn, which had been fed from to the cows in the pasture while the dry weather cut off the supply of grass very liberally, so that they had given more instead of less milk all the dry season, and from which they had been fed every day since, was to be attended to, and Clarence not knowing how best to manage it, and unable to learn from any of our neighbors, took a walk over to the squire's one evening on purpose to learn. By his advice it was cut and put up in large bundles, and the

bundles put into large stooks, much larger than I had ever seen field-corn put into. As there was no room for it in the barn, and it was likely to have to stand in the field until wanted to feed out, a pole was firmly put in the ground and the stook made around it and firmly withed to it, that the winds might not blow it down. There was a large amount of it, for the cows had not eaten one-quarter of it while green. On Saturday the squire drove up again, and after looking over the farm he and Clarence came in, and after greeting my mother, he said: —

"Now, Helen, as the ventures which Clarence has made under my advice, as well as those which he has made without it, appear likely to result so well, I want your permission for him to go into further extravagance to an extent which I never should have advised last spring, but which I think now he may attempt safely."

Mother had to sit down and take a long breath before she could ask, "What is it this time, Squire Grey?"

"Please understand that I have said nothing to Clarence about it yet, but I am going to put my plan before you both and I hope you will approve of it. I can see that, thanks to my plan of the sowed corn and turnips, you will have much more hay and corn-fodder than you will need to feed out for your cows, and there is a neighbor of mine who has three or four good cows, half Alderneys, that he must sell, because he is short of hay and in feeble health, too, and he will sell them cheap, for most of the people that way don't like them as well as native cows, because they don't give milk enough, they say, although they will make more butter, either one of them, if well fed than any of their cows. You can keep them almost as well as not, and next summer they will enable you to make more than twice as much butter as you have made this summer, which I think is not a little."

"But, squire, there is not room in the barn for any more cows," interrupted Clarence.

"Nor was there room in your hen-house last spring for four or five hundred fowls, was there? But you made room for them. Can you not fix a cow-stable at the side of the barn as cheaply as you did your hen-house?"

"I don't know but I might, squire," answered Clarence, who, I think, enjoyed the idea of building again full as well as he did the prospect of having more cows.

"This will make an addition to your manure-heap next spring, and manure is the back-bone of farming. You have money enough on hand to buy the cows and fix the building, I guess, or if you have not, there is enough coming out of your pigs" (we had twenty little pigs this time), "and your cabbages and turnips to pay for it all, and more, too."

"I am perfectly willing for him to do this if you think it will be wise, for I can see the profit in keeping more cows, if there is fodder to winter them on. It is this draining and buying phosphate and such things that I do not understand and feel afraid he will sink money in."

"But," said Clarence, "how can I pasture so many cows next year?"

"I have thought of that, too, and I want you to plough up two or three lots of about an acre each in the pasture, about as far apart as you can, in those places where there is not much now but dry moss, for that is good rye ground, and then sow rye upon them. This will make good feed for the cows in the spring. My reasons for having it in two or three different lots is that the cows will feed in one lot a few days and then go to another a few days, and the first one will be growing again; they will in that way have feed that will last them until you have sowed corn fit to cut for them. This will cost you but your labor and a bushel of rye to the acre, unless you sow grass-seed upon it in the spring, which I would do if it was nothing more than the seed that you can sweep up in the barn floor this winter. The fields where you

have potatoes and field-corn, you intend to put into rye this fall, don't you?"

"No, I thought I should sow them with oats and grass-seed in the spring, and cut the oats green for fodder next year."

"What field do you mean to plant next year?" asked mother.

"This around the house, and that where the sowed corn and turnips are, will be as much as I can get manure for, or take care of, and perhaps more. There is about five acres here, and it ought to be ploughed and planted a few years now."

"Very well planned, master Clarence," said the squire; "and may we call it settled about your buying the four cows?"

"Yes; I will take them as soon as I can get the place fixed to put them in."

"Then I will buy the cows for you if you wish me to, and keep them until you are ready for them. They give milk enough to pay their keeping now, and I can contrive room for them, I guess."

"Now, about the place for them. What is your idea about that, Clarence, for I see you have an idea, and I know your idea of that hen-house beat anything I could have suggested?"

"I suppose I can put a shed on the east side of the barn large enough for four cows, and line the walls up as I did those of the hen-house so it would do. I would not make any floor, but put in sand a foot or two deep, so it would not be muddy."

"Let me suggest an improvement upon your plan: make your shed large enough to hold all your cattle, which will not then cost a great deal more, and another year you can take all the scaffolds out of your barn, so as to keep nothing but hay in that. You will need it all for the grass and oat fodder."

"Let us go out and look at it, if you are willing, squire; I can plan better when I see the place."

So they went out and examined the barn, and then the

squire went home. That evening the boys went down to ask Bill Giles when he could come and help them, for Bill had been at work away all the time, only coming home Saturday nights to stay over Sunday.

He had been doing first rate, he said, all summer, and his home began to seem much more home-like ; for, under mother's tuition, Liza had improved very much in the art of making her house comfortable at less expense than it cost before to make it uncomfortable. Bill promised to be along in about a week, as soon as he could finish the work he had on hand.

The next week the boys and Mike were busy threshing the rye, which had been standing in the field north of the barn, where it had been put up when it was taken off the field where it grew, that the field might be ploughed. Gannett, the tavern-keeper, had engaged the straw at fifteen dollars a ton, and he drew it away as fast as they could get it threshed. It was not finished that week, but they had time to finish it and clear away a place for the new cow-shed, besides drawing home the lumber for it, before Bill came, as his job had lasted longer than he expected.

CHAPTER XI.

Our boarders remained with us three weeks, and we became very well acquainted with them during their stay, little Jessie in particular growing very dear to us.

Henry Farnham had grown quite brown and strong-looking while he was with us, and George Benson had begun to seem more like his brother. He had shaken off his indifference or laziness, and laughed oftener and heartier than when he first came, and seemed to take more interest in the field sports. Jake came for them every morning, sometimes long before daylight, for a fishing excursion, in which case they returned to breakfast, Jake always having a luncheon in his

game-bag, which must be eaten, or it would spoil, he said, when invited to share our breakfast. When he came to the house at an hour when we were likely to be up, he always had something for Jessie — a flower, a curious plant, an Indian's arrow-head, or any little thing that he thought would please her fancy, and she always repaid him with a kiss. I think Jake went without his pipe and tobacco many a morning until after he had seen Jessie, that his lips might be clean to receive her kiss.

One day, when they had been fishing in the morning and a shower had obliged them to remain at the house after breakfast, Jake was sitting by the fire with Jessie on his knee, and George Benson was boasting of a good shot which he made at some bird the day before, when Jake looked up with indignation, and suddenly asked, —

"I suppose you didn't know that when you shot a bird that you didn't want to eat, excepting a crow or a hawk, you killed a man at the same shot, did you?"

"I certainly did not," laughed George; "and I did not know that you had any such superstitions, either, or I would not have shot it."

I suppose we all looked at Jake in some surprise, for he quickly answered: —

"It isn't any superstition, as you call it, but can be figured right out accordin' to Daboll and Pike, and I'll tell you how I look at it. You see every time Clarence here, or any other farmer, plants or sows a seed, there is a bug, or a worm, or some pesky creepin', crawlin' thing stands ready to eat up that seed, or what grows from it, and these little birds are ready to eat up those same bugs and things, and if you had let this one live, he would have ate about a hundred of them to-day, and as many more to-morrow, and a heap of them before he died. But now those bugs will eat up the crops, and some man or woman or little girl, like this I have on my lap, will starve to death for lack of what the

bugs and worms have eaten up. And as near as I can figure it up, one does starve to death for every sich bird that is shot just for the fun of it, and so I make it a rule never to shoot any birds that I don't want to carry home, unless it's a hawk or a crow, that does more hurt than good."

"Thank you, Jake; I will adopt the same rule in future, and your farm assistants are safe for all me. I am afraid that if I do not I may wish some time that I had the crop that the worms have eaten up," and George laughed, but with a look that assured us that he would keep the promise so readily given.

"Well," said Jake, "stranger things than that have happened. It ain't the poor altogether that starves to death, nor riches that will save a man from it. I used to know a man that was about as rich as any in these parts, and as mean, too, and when the news came about so many starving in Ireland, and somebody wanted him to give something to help buy a cargo of flour to send over to them, he said, let them starve; he wasn't afraid that he should starve if they did. But he did starve in less than a year: had a cancer or something in his throat, and couldn't swallow a mouthful for days before he died. He offered the doctors all he was worth if they would only contrive some way to feed him, but they couldn't do nothing for him. I don't know as his refusing to give that time had anything to do with it; but I don't reckon that he felt any better when he thought about refusing to help them that was as hungry as he was."

"I could hardly have pitied him," said Mrs. Benson.

"You think now that you wouldn't, maybe; but I've mostly noticed that a man's worst enemy can't stand by and see him sufferin' sich torment as that a great while without being willin' to help him out of it some way."

Soon the time came for our boarders to go away, and they left, first getting mother to promise that she would take them again next year, if they should decide to come.

CHAPTER XII.

Just before they left, Bill came on to begin the shed, and he and Jake were taken into consultation, the result of which was an enlarging of the original plan for a shed, until it extended around the south and east sides of the barn, eighteen feet wide. The posts were set in the ground, as were the hen-house posts, but the lower ends were first burnt in a fire which was built in the yard, until they were thoroughly charred some ways above the part which would be set in the ground. This was to keep them from decaying, as Jake said such burnt sticks never rotted. Then Mike was put to drawing more slabs and boards, as Clarence had not got enough, after which he and Jake went to drawing sand to cover the ground under the shed a foot deep or more. The sides were covered, and lined with slabs and stuffed with meadow hay; the roof and the mangers for the cows were made of good boards, those which were in the old barn being taken out and put in as far as they would go. The windows, which were left of those which were bought of Bill in the spring, were sufficient for the new cow stables, to light it to the satisfaction of Clarence, who was an enthusiast in regard to sunlight. There were fourteen half-windows, all so arranged as to be easily taken out, or swung up against the wall. This made it necessary to use some boards around where the windows were put in, but the space between them was lined.

As I so minutely described the building of the hennery, I need not tell how the shed was contrived, but I will describe its appearance after it was finished. Passing from out the barn floor at the south side through the old cow stables near the centre, you entered an alley-way about five feet wide, in front of the cows' heads. At the right, in the south-west

corner, was the horse stable, with a chance to put the feed into the mangers from the alley-way. There were stalls for three horses, they standing with their heads towards the cows. These stalls, and a place to hang harnesses, occupied twelve feet of the west end of the shed; there was three feet for a passage-way in front of their heads, and by the side of the cows, into the cow stables, or turning to the right by the harnesses, you could pass through the horse-stable door out of the barn. Going from the entrance to the left, you would pass in front of the cows to the east end. There were mangers there for five cows, with their heads to the north. Then, upon the east side were mangers for nine cows and oxen, and an alley-way in front of them all the way, five feet wide, and an entrance again into the barn floor at the east end of it. In the north-east corner was a shed for wagons and sleds, which had always stood out of doors before. This shed opened to the north. Doors opened from both cow stables into the yard upon the south side. Thus the feed, which was mixed on the barn floor, was carried out one way to the horse and five cows, and the other way to the oxen and the rest of the cows.

This proved a more expensive job than Clarence had anticipated, as it took nearly three thousand feet of boards, besides some of those which he had left from the draining; but he was quite well pleased with it, although he found it not likely to be as warm as the old stable was. But as a help to that, slabs were put upon the timbers above the cows and the bog hay was moved in there from the stack in the yard. This made it much warmer, besides getting the hay under cover. When it was finished the boys went after the new cows and brought them home.

Mother and I carried the boys over in the wagon, and mother had the pleasure of paying the interest upon that mortgage, while Clarence paid for the cows. He had also paid all the expenses of the new shed, and, as many of the

pigs were promised, and he had yet many potatoes and cabbages and nearly all of his turnips left, he hoped to be able soon to pay for the phosphate which had been put upon the rye-field. After the shed was finished the rest of the harvesting was finished as rapidly as it might be, the turnips being left for the last, excepting as the man came after them. The cabbage and turnip leaves were all fed to the cows, and I think they gave more milk and more butter than any one else's cows in the neighborhood, and as we had now eight cows we kept up our supply of butter to the store.

The rye was also sowed in the pasture, as the squire had advised, and the season's work was over, and the question of how we were to live practically settled when we sat down to our Thanksgiving dinner, which we were able to eat with thankful hearts. We had prospered beyond our most sanguine expectations, although we had spent our money almost as freely and as fast as we had taken it in. The two acres in potatoes had yielded over two hundred bushels of fine potatoes; the three acres in corn had given us two hundred and forty baskets of good corn, nearly as much as had been on the eight acres the year before, but there was not near as much pig-corn.

The garden had supplied our wants in its season, and there had been thirty bushels of onions and ten bushels of beets upon it besides, which had been sold. The cabbages had sold for an hundred and sixty dollars and the turnips for nearly an hundred and twenty. Then the pigs, the chickens, the rye-straw, the butter and eggs had helped their share toward our success. After we had taken our Thanksgiving dinner, Clarence brought out that same old ledger of which I have spoken, and gave us an account of the income and expenditures of the farm since he had taken charge of it, for in the time which had passed since the visit to the squire's, which I have chronicled, the produce and the pigs had been sold, and all the debts paid, excepting the mortgage, and Clarence

had been to the squire's to pay for the phosphate which was put upon the rye-field. I have the book before me with the original entries, but I will only give the statement of the result: —

We had sold off the farm: —

160 bushels of potatoes, at 45 cts. per bush.	$72 00
Cabbages at various times and prices, amounting to	158 42
250 bush. turnips, at 50 and 45 cts. per bush.	116 50
30 bush. onions, at 75 cts. per bush.	22 50
10 bush. beets, at 60 cts. per bush.	6 00
520 lbs. butter, at 25 cts. per lb.	130 00
Eggs to amount of	35 60
Chickens and hens to amount of	315 35
Pigs to amount of	120 00
Six tons rye-straw, at $15 per ton	90 00
60 bush. rye, at 70 cts. per bush.	42 00
Garden stuff	4 15
	$1,112 52
And had received as board money	105 00
Amount of income for less than a year	$1,217 52

We had paid out: —

For pigs	$25 00	
For 4 cows	165 00	
For 5 loads slabs	5 00	
For boards for draining	25 00	
For boards and lumber for sheds for cows	55 00	
For superphosphate	165 00	
For garden and turnip seed	4 25	
For carpenter's labor	10 00	
For Jake and Mike's labor	87 50	
For blacksmithing	7 42	
For groceries and other things from store	183 40	
For fresh meat from market wagon	31 70	
For interest	30 00	
For taxes	45 50	
		839 77
Leaving on hand		$377 75

We had on hand also, new stock: —

Four cows	$165 00	
Four calves, two lambs	50 00	
Two old hogs, three pigs	40 00	
110 fowls, at 75c	82 50	
		$237 50
Permanent improvement, draining, cost about	$40 00	
Hen-house and shed had cost about	60 00	
Phosphate on rye-field	110 00	
		$210 00

But as we had less corn, less potatoes and rye, and less of some other things in the house, we only estimated our profit for our labor for the year at about eight hundred dollars, including the increase of fodder for the cows. At any rate, we felt that we had reason to be abundantly satisfied with our season's work.

"And now, I suppose," said my mother, "you intend to pay up as much of that mortgage as you can. You might pay three hundred dollars on it, which would make it very small."

"I know I might, mother, but I have not made up my mind that it is best to do so. I am so well pleased with my improvements that I think of carrying them along farther, and trying if I cannot make more money next year than I have this, and it may need this money for that purpose. The squire is in no hurry for his money, and if it will pay to spend it on the farm as well as what I have spent this year has paid, it will be better than paying the mortgage with it. We have done well, but nothing extraordinary so far, for if a man had hired such a place as this, with the stock and tools on it, he would have to pay all this money, or most of it, for rent, and then your wages and Alice's would have taken two hundred dollars, and Ned and I wouldn't have much for our work. Now, I think the way to run a farm and make it pay, is to do just as storekeepers do. When

they sell anything and get the money for it, they put the money right into the stores again in new goods. If they should do like farmers, when they get a dollar put it somewhere outside of the land they got it from, their stores would not pay long."

"But what more improvements do you want to make?" asked my mother.

"I want to draw sand upon that field which I drained this winter, and then next spring harrow it over and sow grass-seed and clover. I have got to build a new hen-house, as large as the one I built last spring, for I want one to set hens in, and the other to keep them in while laying. This old one I shall put into a piggery altogether. Then, I want to get that bog meadow, or a part of it, into cranberries, for I have been reading about how they pay great profit, and I think that is a great place for them. Then, there is a hydraulic ram to be put into the brook in the pasture to bring water up to the barn-yard, and house, too; and an apparatus to get to steam the hay for the cows, and another to cook swill for the hogs; and the orchard to set out in this field where the sowed corn and turnips were; and the house to fix up a little better if you are going to have boarders next summer again, and — "

"Stop a minute, Clarence; you have planned enough to cost four thousand dollars instead of four hundred. If the house was good enough for those who were here this fall it is good enough for anybody that I want to board, and if it is not they can go farther; so you can take that off your list."

"Very well, I expect to take several of these things off for this year, but I wanted to show you that I could see enough that I thought it would pay to do, to keep me busy this winter, and that I might need a large part of this money before I began to get much off the farm next year. We shall have to depend upon our eggs entirely this winter, for we cannot make butter to sell any longer, though we might if we had

any way to keep it up as yellow as it has been, for all the fault that is found now, is that it is white. They own that it tastes just as good, but they don't like to see white butter."

"But if you do not succeed next year as well as you have this, you may wish that you had been more prudent with this money, and had paid a part of the mortgage while you could."

"I have but little fear of not doing as well next year, for I have twice as much to do with. I shall have nearly as much again manure this year that I had last to put upon the land, and we shall have twice as many cows, and I can easily raise twice as many chickens, and I will have more early ones, too. Oh, I am confident that I can manage to make out as well next year as I have this year."

"Very well, you can have your own way, and I have no fault to find with your management this year!"

CHAPTER XIII.

Thus the winter's work was planned and soon fairly begun. Mike was sent for and set at work preparing ground for the new hen-house, which was to be something very different from the other. "You see," said Clarence, "the other was built just as cheap as it could be, because I had no money to spare, and I thought if I could build one cheaply that would answer for a few years, I could make enough to build a good one then or I would give it up, but I have made enough this year on the chickens to build a good one, and I am going to do it, not to take the place of the old one, but to use with it until I get ready to build the one in place of it. This is going to be kept on purpose to hatch chickens and raise them in, but not for them to lay in."

Bill Giles was taken into consultation again, but the plan

was Clarence's, excepting that Bill was charged with the duty of seeing that it was practicable. This was to be only twelve feet wide and forty feet long, and built mostly under ground, very much like a hot-house. It was put between the house and the other hen-house, just into the pasture side and upon the south side of the hill. A cellar was dug so as to be about two feet below the level of the ground on the front or south side. The north and east walls were of stone, six feet high, the east and south walls only two feet high of stone and four feet of timbers and boards. The entrance was at the centre of the east end. The roof was highest in the centre, and the south side of it mostly of glass as was also the south front. Bill Giles had no more windows to sell, but he knew some one whom he had been at work for who had, and Clarence went with him to buy them. They cost rather more than those which were bought of Bill, but they were larger. There was a half-window in each end in the peak of the roof. There were nests all around the inside, next to the wall, and these were so arranged that they could be taken apart and taken out to be white-washed and cleaned.

The whole cost of this building was one hundred and thirty dollars. We should have thought this a large sum a few months before, but we (at least Ned and I) had begun to have such faith in the success of our elder brother, that we should not have ventured to remonstrate if he had proposed roofing the whole farm with glass. But by this time the hundred and forty pullets were giving us from six dozen to ten dozen of eggs every day, and as they were selling at winter prices, we could soon hope to regain the money. To make them do so well we had to take the best of care of them. Corn and meal we had in plenty, of our own raising thus far, but Clarence bought meat-scraps, and ground bone and oats for them and was careful to see that we fed them regularly, and gave warm water several times a day. Ned looked

after those in the hen-house on the hill, while I attended to those in the old hen-house.

The care of cows and calves, lambs and hogs, took up considerable time every day, and as Ned and I were attending school again, Clarence found it necessary to get Mike to help him about drawing sand upon the drained field. As they put about four hundred loads upon that field and fifty more upon the grass-land below the garden and spread it evenly, you can imagine that it was no small task; but they found time to do it, and also to provide a year's supply of wood, cut, split, and piled in the wood-house, before spring. I forgot to mention that a few loads of strawy manure had been drawn out, when the ground first froze, and spread upon the strawberry-bed and among the other bushes which were set in the garden. The strawberry vines were also covered with bushes and leaves from the woods.

Toward spring the droppings under the hen-roosts, and the sand which had been mixed with them, were carted out and spread upon the grass-land between the pasture lane and the road, and during the February thaw the manure in the yard and lane-way was thrown into a heap. The sand which had been drawn into the hole at the end of the old barn was covered by the new shed, and Clarence did not intend to move that until spring, while that which was put under the barn floor had not had much chance to improve from its condition when carted in. I could see by words that Clarence let fall at times that he was fretting because he had not a shed or a barn cellar for his barn-yarn manure, and also that he had to drive the cattle to the brook to drink; but he did not feel able to attempt to remedy either of these faults at present, as he had been obliged to employ Mike nearly all winter, and his wages, with the cost of the hen-house, and the bran and oats which he had bought for cows, calves, and pigs had sadly reduced the little pile of money, of which he had been so proud at Thanksgiving time. Certainly, the egg-money was help-

ing very much to keep the balance straight, but I knew that he had also other plans which would require more money before summer came again.

But we were by no means discouraged. In February there were twenty hens with chickens in the new hen-house, and forty-two more were sitting, which promised well for the chicken-trade in June. And all the stock at the barn was thriving very well. The cows were fat and smooth, for Ned carded and bruised them every day, as he also did the calves, while Clarence fed them with bran regularly. He believed that it would pay to feed liberally even when the cows were not in milk, as he had an idea, gained from his agricultural papers, that by so doing he led them to give more milk when they came to milking, and that, if fat, their milk would make much more butter than if lean.

The little pigs were also kept growing rapidly, in spite of the saying that pigs will not do well in winter, for the pen was warm. Clarence put two windows in the south end of it, which were taken out of the barn when the shed had made them unnecessary. The potatoes and turnips which were too small to sell had all been fed out, — a part of them to the cows and heifers and a part to the hogs.

So the spring found us ready for another year's hard work.

CHAPTER XIV.

As so much more work had been planned for the next summer, it was thought best to engage Mike for the season. In fact, he had been kept busy nearly all winter, although working by the day. I think it is time that I introduced Mike Murphy, for we thought him as original a character as any that you are acquainted with in Brookfield. In the first place he was Irish, and Irish were not plenty in that region. In

the next place, he was not a Catholic, but a most zealous Methodist. He was not a great talker, although at times he would talk quite freely, but not when he was at work, and seldom except he was speaking of places or people that he had seen, for he had worked in all parts of the country. Last, but not least, he did not drink whiskey or use tobacco. Add to this that he was short, stout, broad-shouldered, and with a grave-looking face, badly scarred with small-pox, and a red head, and that he was apparently about fifty years old, and you have Mr. Murphy before you. He lived in a small cottage near the schoolhouse, where he had a wife and about a dozen children of all ages.

Ann Murphy, his wife, took care of the pigs, the cow, and the children, and found time to do odd jobs of washing and house-cleaning for the neighbors, when needed, besides berry-picking in the summer.

The first thing to be attended to in the spring was to plough the fields where corn and potatoes grew last year, and sow oats and clover with grass-seed. This finished, brushed, rolled, and the stone out of the way, the next thing was to harrow the drained field and the other below the garden, upon which the sand had been put, and the other upon which the sand from the hen-house had been spread, and sow clover-seed upon them. As this took about an hundred pounds of clover-seed, some of the neighbors saw fit to remonstrate with Clarence for such extravagance, but he went on his own way, merely saying that, "if one seed out of an hundred comes up it will give me clover hay enough to pay for seed and labor."

This having been done the manure was drawn upon the land where the cabbages grew last year, and that field was ploughed and potatoes planted where the manure had been ploughed under. The wood-ashes were used in the hill also this year as last. There was only one acre of potatoes planted, the rest of the field being reserved for corn, of which there would be three acres where the sowed corn and turnips

had been, upon which the manure was to be spread and harrowed in. Clarence also bought all the wood-ashes that he could find for sale around the neighborhood, paying therefor a dollar a barrel, which was more than the "soft-soap-man" would pay, thus incurring the enmity of that greasy individual. This he intended to use around the corn when it came up and was ready for the first hoeing.

The garden, or that part of it not occupied by the strawberries and other berries, was ploughed and manured very liberally, the manure being ploughed under. The parsnips had been taken out when the ground first thawed and fed out to one of the new cows, which had dropped a fine heifer-calf about the first of April. The garden was planted and sowed with very much the same crops as last year, excepting that the garden-beans were omitted, and only one lot of peas and sweet-corn put in, the rest being left for a part of the field around the house. While Clarence and Ned were planting the garden and hoeing the strawberries and bushes, Mike was ploughing the field by the house and getting it ready, but before anything was done about planting that, the cornfield was manured and planted, the manure being put on more freely than it was last year, as it had also been upon that where the potatoes were planted. Then the rest of the manure was put upon the end of the other field next to the road, covering nearly an acre of it. For the rest a ton and a half of phosphate was to be ordered. The acre which was manured was nearly half taken for garden stuff, of which there was a greater variety and a larger amount planted than last year, sweet-corn, beans, peas, squashes, and melons being put upon this land. By the time this was done, Mike had the yards filled again with the mud that had been drawn from the pond and left in the pasture.

That which Clarence had put into the yards last summer having been thoroughly forked over and mixed with other contents of the yards, had been pronounced by him to be as

good as it could be made for fertilizing the land and yielding food for the young plants. But while this work was being done other things had not been neglected; the cows and calves had at last been turned into the pasture, and the rye which had been sown there had proved a perfect success, furnishing plenty of food for all that we had to turn into it; so plenty in fact, that, by the advice of Jake, Clarence did not leave them in for only a part of the day at a time at first, for fear of their over-eating, and this caution was not unnecessary, for one of the calves was quite sick on the second day, seeming to be in great pain, and badly swollen in the body.

Uncle Tom Hardy was sent for, he being considered the best hand with sick cattle. As soon as he looked at the calf he said: —

"'Taint nothin' serious, young man; eat a little too much of that rye, that's all. Here, Alice, you run in and tell your mother to put about two tablespoonfuls of ginger, one of saleratus, and a little molasses into a quart pitcher, and pour bilin' water on it, and let it stand a few minutes, and then pour it into a long-nosed bottle, and send it out here."

I did not stop to hear what else he had to say, but hurried off, and when I came back the calf's head was raised up and the medicine poured down its throat. Then the sick animal was lifted up and made to walk around. I would have been very glad to stop and watch the recovery of the calf, for I had no doubt now of its recovery, but I was obliged to return to the house. In about an hour Clarence came in and said the calf was all right, but he beat up an egg in a cup, and put a handful of powdered charcoal into it, which he said he was going to give it, as a further aid to a perfect cure. For some days the calf was kept in, and was fed on green grass very carefully, but soon was well as the others, and apparently no worse for the sickness.

Other things had progressed. There were nearly a thousand chickens at the hen-houses by the first of May. There

were eighteen little pigs at the piggery, most of which were engaged before they were old enough to take away. The lambs, or sheep, as we now called them, had been sheared early in May, and had yielded ten pounds of wool. All the cows had calved before being turned into the pasture, and as the calves were all half Alderney, and those from the new cows three-quarters Alderney, we did not need to change the heifer calves; but the others were exchanged with the squire the same as last year, and we thus had eight heifer calves growing to still further increase our stock.

The gardens had been hoed once, and the potatoes cultivated by horse not less than twice, and the grass was starting finely, when one day we were surprised by a visit from Mr. Benson. He had with him a stranger, whom he introduced as his friend, Mr. Rockwood. They bore us kind messages and tokens of remembrance from Mrs. Benson and Jessie and our other friends, and somewhat astonished us by stating that the former two were desirous of again coming to board with us, and that Mr. Rockwood wished to engage board also for his wife and little daughter and his mother and two sisters. They wished to come the latter part of May and spend the summer with us, and perhaps the autumn, and Mr. Benson and Mr. Rockwood wished to come every Saturday night and stay until Monday. Mr. Rockwood also wished to bring his two horses and carriage and engage Clarence to keep them and take care of them for him, or find some one to do so. Mrs. Rockwood would drive herself, he said, as she was accustomed to do so in the country.

My mother scarcely knew what to reply at first, but finally answered: "I fear my chambers would not be suitable for so many, as I have only the two front chambers large, and the rest are very small, and I fear the ladies would not like them."

"Will you allow me to be the judge of that? You have scarcely an idea of the size of the rooms to which we are condemned when we stay at the fashionable hotels at Saratoga

and such places, and I am very sure that if we endured them we can surely rest in yours. We only want the chambers to sleep in, Mrs. Reynolds, and when weather admits, the ladies will be out of doors much of the time, and they would rather be together than to divide their party in different houses."

It ended, as I had expected it to end, by his inspecting the rooms, and declaring them large enough and good enough, and making an offer for the accommodations wanted, which we thought was liberal enough. It certainly insured us a steady income of forty-eight dollars a week, including the amount to be paid for feed and care of horses. And as they insisted upon paying a month in advance, we were once more supplied with money, for Clarence's improvements had almost run away with that which seemed so much to us last fall, and not only with that, but with the pig-money besides, excepting what was reserved to buy the phosphate. They remained with us over night, and Mr. Benson was just getting ready to start after tea for a visit to Jake, when we saw that individual entering the yard.

As soon as he entered his hand was grasped by Mr. Benson, with a cordiality that showed that he had a true regard for the rough hunter.

"Well, cappen," said Jake, "I heard down at the Corners that you had come up this way, and I thought I must come up and see you once more."

"Very glad to meet you, Jake," answered Mr. Benson; "I was just coming to see you. Let me introduce my friend, Mr. Rockwood."

"I am glad to see one I have heard so much of," said Mr. Rockwood.

"If you are a friend of the cappen's, I am glad to know yer," said Jake; "for I calculate he is one of that kind money don't spile, and that's a scarce sort, I tell you. I never knew being poor to spile a man, though losing riches does sometimes; but when a man that has been poor gets rich,

it's about sure to spile him; while if a man is born with the notion that he has plenty of money, it's most likely to give him a notion that he is better than other folks, and then he stops tryin' to see how he can be better than he is already, and I calculate, cappen, that's what we are in this world for."

"Then you think, sir, that it is better for a man to be poor than rich?" said Mr. Rockwood.

"Well, I suppose the best way for now is just the way it is now, for He who fixed things knows better than you or me."

"How should you like the idea of the rich dividing with the poor, so that all should have alike?" asked Mr. Rockwood.

"Before I should agree to that, I suppose I should want to be pretty sure that it would give me more than I've got now, 'stead of taking anything away," said Jake with a laugh.

"I see," said Mr. Rockwood, "you are quite a philosopher."

"That depends upon how you mean that word. If you mean that I think everything is in the hands of One who will guide us all right, and that it will come out for the best if the route is a little rough by spells, then I take it as a compliment and thank you. But I didn't come here to hear myself clack like an old woman at a tea-drinkin'; I come to see the cappen this time, and I want to hear from his little woman."

"My wife is in very good health," answered Mr. Benson, misunderstanding Jake, purposely, I thought.

"Thank you," said Jake, "that's good news; but it wasn't her that I was thinking of; for I shouldn't have took sich a liberty in speaking of her, though if I had had my good manners aboard, I might have known that I ought to ask about her first. But it was the *little* woman, that used to sit on Jake's knee, that I most wanted to hear from."

"She never was as well before as she has been since she left here, and she sent Jake something to remember her by,"

answered he, taking out his pocket-book and handing Jake a photograph. "And here is another for Mrs. Reynolds, though I think she most wanted to send it to Ned," he added, with a glance at my younger brother which set him blushing at a rate that was unusual with him.

Of course all conversation was suspended until we had all seen and admired the pictures, and Jake was the first to resume it.

"Thank her and you too, cappen, but you tell her that Jake didn't need anything to remember her by, for I haven't been more likely to forget her than a hungry horse is to forget oats that he is longing for all the time. But I am glad to get it, to show that she remembered me. And, now, how is George and Henry?"

"George has been in Europe some months, travelling, partly on business and partly for pleasure. We heard from him a short time ago, well and prospering, and enjoying life very well. Henry is following up his studies, and in better health than he was last year. I hope to have them both down here to go hunting with us next fall, if nothing goes wrong."

"I shall be glad to travel the woods with you all again, cappen, though you won't need me to show you round now; but I shall be glad of your company, if you like to have me with you. And that reminds me, cappen, that somebody sent me a keg of powder and two or three bags of shot about last Christmas time, that is the best I ever saw, and I haven't scarcely missed a shot since I begun to use it, and it isn't nigh used up yet. If you happen to see the man that sent it, you can tell him how thankful Jake was, not only for the things, but for liking old Jake well enough to know what would suit him."

"If I see him, I will," said Mr. Benson, gravely; "and as somebody from this way (perhaps my friend, the hotel-keeper) has kept me well supplied with game all winter, I wish you would try to find out who it is, and tell him that I

have always thought of these old woods and the pleasant times we had last fall when I have tasted them; and little Jessie has eaten his gifts when she has been unable to eat anything else."

"I'll bear it in mind," said Jake, "and tell him all you've said; but I don't allow that it's any great shakes, for sich things have been so plenty here this winter that we couldn't eat them all ourselves. And so Henry is studyin' yet? What does he calculate on bein'? — a doctor, or a lawyer, or a minister?"

"I don't think he has decided yet. Which would you advise?"

"I don't think much of lawyers, any way, for it's about as much a part of their business to try to make out that wrong is right, or to mix things up so that you can't tell which from t'other — so that you will call the wrong thing the right thing, as anything they have to do. Not but a man might be honest and on the right side, if he is a lawyer; but he is under great temptations to work for the pay, and work on the side that offers best pay, or speaks for him first. As for a minister, learning of any sort won't make a man a minister, if it isn't born in him; if he aint chock-full of love for the One who made him, and for all that He has made, he never will be anything but a preacher, and that is a very different thing. As for a doctor, they have a chance to do a heap of good, if they just work right; they can learn a great deal about what to do for sick folks and make a pretty good rough guess when they don't know; but I should like them better if they would tell them that they are doctrin' when they know what to do for them, and when they are only guessin'. I reckon, though, that if Henry is to study for one of them three, that he had best to study for to be a doctor."

"I don't know but you are right, Jake; at any rate, I cannot dispute you," said Mr. Benson.

"I allow, cappen, that these boys have fixed up things round here some since you went away."

"They have made some improvements, which Clarence has been showing us this afternoon, and I think he is managing very shrewdly."

"Well, I think if he keeps at it a few years more that there won't be a farm anywhere about that will come up to this, unless it's the squire's, over in Stafford. Fact is, he has got hold of the right end of the stick, and that's the main thing. Give things plenty to make them grow and do their best on, whether they are planted in the ground or tied up in the barn, and then they will do their part."

"It does not seem as if I had made a beginning yet," said Clarence; "for I can see so much more that I want to do, that I don't know when I shall get to the end of it."

"You must work at it as you did at the big arithmetic when you went to school," said Jake; "just work away on the page you have got to, and not be looking at those ahead of you till you come to them. You must stick to it, and keep stickin' to it, if you want to come out at the end."

"That is what I mean to do," answered Clarence; "but the more I do, the more I see that needs doing."

"That's the way with all the world; but I must be goin' home, or the old woman will be worried about me; just remember, cappen, if you and the boys come down next fall I want to go out with you a few days for fun and not for pay. And tell the little lady that Jake isn't goin' to forget her not for many a day."

"You will have a chance to see her soon, Jake, as I have made arrangements for my wife and the children to come down here and spend the summer with Mrs. Reynolds, and I hope you will keep up your acquaintance with them."

"There, now, that's the best news I've heard for a long while," said Jake, "and you may be sure that I shall keep an eye on them at spells. And shall we see you down here, too?"

"I shall probably spend the Sabbath here," said Mr. Benson.

"That's right, cappen. For my part, I don't see how a body can spend Sabbath, which means a day of rest, in the city; but I suppose there's a deal in getting used to it. Come, Rover, let's go home now. Good-evening, sir," turning to Mr. Rockwood, then to mother, "Mrs. Reynolds, I shall come up some time to see the boys and Miss Alice. To-night I come to see the cappen. The old dog knows you, too, doesn't he? and is glad to see you, too. But he doesn't know you as well as I do, and he was afraid you had got proud since you had been gone. He wouldn't have come near you if you hadn't spoken to him first, and I doubt if he ever would again, if you had let him go this time."

For Mr. Benson had called to the dog, who had been looking at him with wistful eyes, and now the great hound had his forefeet in Mr. Benson's lap, and with head pillowed upon Mr. Benson's shoulder, was manifesting his delight at meeting again a friend.

CHAPTER XV.

Before the gentlemen went away it was arranged that Clarence should return with them to the city that he might buy his phosphate, and also that he might purchase, under Mr. Benson's directions, certain groceries which we should need during the stay of our boarders. Mr. Benson assured us that a considerable saving could be made by purchasing at wholesale stores in the quantity; not less than ten per cent. on nearly all goods, and much more upon teas, molasses, and other articles. We also desired to see if he could not get a better price for his butter in the city than at the Corners, about which Mr. Benson agreed also to help him; and then he was to take a day or two to see the sights of the

city, which he had never visited, and to return with the people when they came. The care of the farm was left to Ned and Mike, with many instructions in regard to care of calves and chickens. To us at home the time passed slowly, and we had not thought we could miss our quiet lad so much as we did.

But it passed, and on Saturday all came together, and the dread of the new acquaintances we were called upon to make was forgotten in our haste to greet Clarence and our friends. But our greetings over, Mr. Rockwood introduced his wife and her mother and sisters. I had expected to see in the former a masculine woman, I suppose because he had spoken of her driving the horses as a matter of course, and I had an idea then that only such could or would drive two horses.

Imagine my surprise at seeing a very short, pleasant-looking girl, with hair in ringlets, and with spectacles on her nose, who looked as if she might be a school-teacher, brought forward as the wife of the grave-looking Mr. Rockwood. Her mother was a stoutly built lady of about sixty years old, apparently a little sharp in temper, very polite, if not very pleasant. Her name was Mrs. Vining. The eldest daughter, Annie, was like her in appearance, looking older than Mrs. Rockwood, though really four years younger. The youngest, Miss Henrietta, seemed a mere girl of about my age; and I was pleased to see that she and Clarence were already good friends. The boarders were quickly shown to their rooms, and mother and I returned to the kitchen, that we might hear from Clarence an account of his adventures.

Suffice it to say that while the sights of the great city were as novel and amusing to him as to any country lad who visits it for the first time, he seemed most taken up by the wonderful tools and machinery for farm work which he had seen at the agricultural store, and the amount of farm produce which could be sold at the market. He had succeeded well in his purchases, but had not been able to find a market for his but-

ter at any greater price than he had obtained at the Corners, partly because of being unknown and having no specimen with him, and partly from the fact that he had no ice to pack it in, and the dealer thought it could not be sent so far in summer without ice with any surety of its arriving in good shape. He was, however, shown some which looked no better than ours, which the dealer paid three times as much for as we obtained, and he declared that he would not be without ice another year.

Clarence was glad to return to the farm, for the endless noise and bustle and hurry of the city was tiresome to him; so much that he thought he would have been tired if he had done nothing but stand and watch others moving so rapidly about. They had had a pleasant drive down, Mr. Rockwood having come with his own team, and Mr. Benson bringing Clarence and Miss Henrietta in another, in which he and Mr. Rockwood would return on Monday. After that time mother was very busy, and so was I, when not in school, and it became necessary also to call in the aid of Ann Murphy, Mike's wife, to assist mother two days in the week.

I was not able to keep as close a watch of the farming as I had done before; but the boys kept me well posted in the evening as to what was done, so I did not lose my interest in it. If I could have had my choice I would have preferred working out in the field to working in the house, but it was in the house that I was most needed, for we had now the milk of eight cows to make butter from, and it was no small job to do this in addition to the other work.

I knew that after Clarence's return the hoeing was quickly finished; the phosphate put upon the land and the sowed corn put in; the cabbages, of which there were not quite as many as last year, set out and the turnips sowed. The wood-ashes which Clarence had bought in the spring were in part put around the hills of field and sweet corn, about a half pint to each hill, just before hoeing, and the rest sowed upon the

onion and other beds in the garden. Then the strawberry-bed began to bear, and it soon became necessary to employ a large company of women and children to pick them, while Clarence went off every afternoon to Blackington with them, returning in the evening.

Mr. Benson had been kind enough to order the boxes and crates necessary for the business. There was also some green-peas more than we needed, which were taken to Blackington in June. Clarence grumbled not a little at not having a smarter horse to go with, but he could afford no other this year.

Upon more than one occasion Miss Henrietta Vining went with him for the sake of the ride, although she was not very anxious for a ride when her mother and sisters went. By the last of June, Clarence began haying, engaging Jake to help. Some of the neighbors saw fit to remonstrate again against cutting the grass so early, but upon the three principal lots, on which the clover-seed had been sown, clover formed no small part of the crop, and as it grew very thick, he was afraid it would lodge. Soon after they began, Jake and Mike were sitting in the kitchen one night after supper, and mother asked Jake how the hay would turn out.

"Never saw no sich crop on this farm, and I never expected to, two years ago. Beats all creation; its lucky he has got the scaffold out of the barn so as to have room for hay, and I don't know as that will be room enough, for he is talking about taking another crop off in September or August, and I shouldn't wonder if he did. If he does he will have to hire some of Uncle Thomas's land to stack it on. In fact, I doubt his getting in all of this crop, and it is as pretty hay for cows as they need to have. Seems as though everything that boy takes hold of always comes out right. That field that he drained, now will cut enough sight better grass than it ever did before, and it is about two weeks earlier than it used to be."

"Sure, Mrs. Reynolds, you needn't fear but there'll be hay for all the crathurs this winter, and it will be no small lot that is needed, aither, wid all the calves he has growin', and the heifers and all. It bates me intirely," said Mike.

"I helped cut that field last year that we cut to-day," said Jake, "and there was not two tons of hay on it, nor much more than a ton and a half, and now if we haven't put four tons into tumbles there this afternoon I never will guess again. That stuff that come out of the hen-house is powerful, I tell you."

"I began to think it was too powerful, when the grass first came up," said Clarence, "for it looked as if it was burnt at first, but after a rain it began to look green again."

"Well," said Jake, "it is just such a crop as I like to swing the scythe in. I don't believe the squire himself has got better mowing. And I had as lieve work for you as for him and risk it."

"You might well say that, Misther Jake, if you had worked for the govenor I did onc't," said Mike.

"Did you ever work for a real governor, Mike," asked Ned.

"I did that for two year for Guvnor Brown of Connecticut, and if ever I worked for a man that was uncomfortable to get along wid, he was the man."

"Well," said Jake, "I haven't no acquaintance with the governors, but I always had an idea that they must be smarter than other folks."

"Sure," said Mike, "I've seen them, and seen ginerals and one President, but I don't see as they are any great shakes, more than the lords and dukes I've seen in the ould country, and they were born to be what they are."

"If they would choose the best men for such places, instead of the richest or the smartest, I reckon it would be worth goin' some ways to see one; but I allow there's better men in town than them that gets town offices, and it may be there's better men in the States than gets the big offices," said Jake.

CHAPTER XVI.

By the time haying was over, I could see that Clarence had the improvement fever again, but he scarcely knew where to begin. He felt the want of a new barn very much, for his barn was filled, sheds and all, and the bog-meadow hay stacked out of doors, and the rye out of doors, and he hoped for a second crop upon his improved fields nearly equal to the first, if it did not prove too dry; and, in fact, the drouth could not much affect either of those fields. He had some money on hand, as the strawberry crop had proved very profitable; the chicken dealer had been after several loads of chickens, taking over three hundred in June, but it was not likely to prove enough for such a barn as he wanted, and he was loth to build a small barn. While he was puzzling over it, the squire came over, and in a short time the trouble was laid before him.

"Nothing easier," said he. "How much have you got to spend now?"

"I have about four hundred dollars, with the butter money, and what mother has of board money, and I may get another hundred in a month or two."

"How much will such a barn as you want cost?"

"I do not know," answered Clarence; "I want a good barn while I am about it, and one that will be large enough for the farm the next twenty years; but I have not planned it yet, and should not know what it would cost if I did. But I know what I have will not do it, and I haven't anything I want to sell to raise it."

"You can go on and build such a building as you want, as far as your money will go, and when you get to the end of it, come and give me a mortgage or bill of sale of the build-

ing, and I will let you have enough to finish it. If your crops do as well as last year you will pay for it this fall."

"Can I do so?"

"Certainly, or your mother will have to for you, for you are not of age yet," said the squire.

"But I do not think she will want to do it," said Clarence.

"I think she will not object," answered the squire, "for you have made the farm and stock worth a thousand dollars more than it was when your father died, already, and if you build a barn it will make it worth just as much more. I will talk to her about it."

And very much to my surprise, and to that of Clarence also, she gave a ready consent, saying: —

"I have made up my mind, squire, that it is of no use to hinder him in doing what he wishes to. He has managed wisely thus far, and I begin to think my judgment must be wrong when it goes against his. So go on, and I will sign all the papers that are necessary."

The next thing was to find Bill Giles, and I went with Clarence the next Saturday night for that purpose. When our errand was stated, Bill said: "I have got a job now that I can keep till fall, if I choose, but I can get clear on a week's notice, and I will if you need me — and I had rather work nearer home just now, and would rather work for you than any one else."

"Then, I want you to help me draw a plan, and after that I want you to select the lumber and hire hands enough to have it done early in September," said Clarence.

"I will," said Bill, "and if we can agree upon a plan now, I can order the lumber next week and be ready to strike work week after."

As Clarence had given the subject considerable thought already, it was not very difficult to agree upon enough of the plan for Bill to order the lumber by, and for Clarence to dig the cellar by, and as the plan adopted was subsequently much

modified, I will not detail the plans discussed, preferring to describe the building when finished. The next week the boys, with Mike and Jake and two or three others a part of the time, were busy digging the cellar for the main barn, and laying the cellar wall. As this barn was intended to be what the old barn now was, a hay barn, so the cellar under it was intended to be a root cellar only, or for storing roots and such other things as usually go into a farm-house cellar. The barn was made forty-eight feet long, and thirty feet wide, and with twenty feet posts. This was a most unusual height for that section, but the required hay-room could he gained by increasing the height cheaper than by adding to width or length. Eighteen and twenty-two feet were talked of, but twenty was finally decided upon as the best height. The spot selected was near the old barn, but a little nearer to the house. There was a drive-way through the centre of it fourteen feet wide and thirty long; north of that was a bay for hay eighteen feet wide and thirty long, occupying the whole north end of the barn; south of the drive-way, in the south-west corner, was a carriage-room, ten by eighteen feet, with a rolling door opening to the west, and another into the drive-way, each large enough to drive a carriage through; also a small door on the south end; from this room a stair-way went up to the second story, where was a room over the carriage-room which was used for a workshop and store-room for small tools; this room was the same size as the carriage-room, and had two windows on the south and three on the west, and there was a chimney came down into it, thus making it possible to have a stove in it; next beyond these two rooms and the stairways was another bay for hay, which was four-teen by eighteen, excepting the room taken up by the stair-way. The cellar-stairs went down under the others, and were entered by a door from the drive-way, and an elevator also run from cellar to loft by the side of the stairway, which could be used either from cellar to carriage-room, or

to the workshop. There was also a large scuttle in the floor of the drive-way, which opened nearly over the centre of the cellar for greater convenience in putting down roots. Thus they could be put down the scuttle-way and be brought up when wanted by the elevator into the carriage-room. In the south-east corner was an alleyway, six by eighteen, which had one window and a door opening to the south. As it was intended the old barn should be moved and put on as an addition to the new one another season when the hay was out of it, the new barn was left unfinished upon the east side as far as it was intended for the other to join it. It was made tight there, but unfinished opposite to this alleyway. The sides of the bays for hay next to the drive-way were all boarded up, though doors were made through which the hay could be put. These doors (three upon the north side and two upon the south side of the drive-way) were divided into sections of four feet high, one above another, so that as fast as the hay was put in, the door opposite it was closed and hay put in above. Over the drive-way was a scaffold for hay fourteen feet square, at each end, thus leaving a space twelve feet by fourteen through which to lift the hay to the upper part of the barn, but even this space was covered with a movable platform after the hay was all in, so that from the drive-way no hay could be seen upon entering the barn. A door at the east end of the drive-way made it possible to drive entirely through the barn. Add to this an outside entrance to the cellar, upon the south side, and protected from cold by a double door at the foot of the stairs, and a "bulkhead" door at the top of the stairs, and that the stairway was wide enough for two men to walk down with a bushel-basket between them, and that wooden boxes, nearly a foot square, went up from either end of the cellar through the hay-mow to the eaves of the barn, and that a small and inexpensive ventilator was placed upon the roof, and a window was in each end of the barn near the peak of the roof, and a window in

each door of the drive-way, and you have as correct a description of our new barn as I can give. Although not very pretentious, yet when clapboarded and painted (a light brown, with darker trimmings), it was elegant enough to put to shame the old house and barn. It was larger and more expensive than was needed for the farm just now, but Clarence said he meant to make the barn fit for the farm as it would be rather than as it was now.

"Well, Mike," said Jake one day when the barn was nearly finished, "had Governor Brown that you was telling us of as good a barn as this?"

"That he hadn't," answered Mike; "for though he had two barns, and aither one cost more than this, yet this is worth the two of them. Ye see he got one of those fellows from the city, what do ye call them, thats make plans for houses and barns and sich buildin's, and makes 'em look purty on paper?"

"Architects," suggested Bill Giles.

"Yes, that's what I mane; one of them to plan 'em for him, and they didn't know no more what was naded to make a barn handy to work in than Mister Jake here does about a ship; and, sure, a man couldn't do half the work in aither of them that he might have done if they had been built by a man that knew what it was to take care of horses and cows. Iverything was unconvenient-like as it could be."

"What was the trouble with them, Mike?" asked Clarence.

"Well, at the coach-barn, as they called the one where he kept his horses, half the room was a carriage-room that was too wide for one carriage and not quite wide enough for two, on the side of aich other, though it only lacked three inches of it, and then you had to go out of the door and half around the barn to get to the room where the horses were; and then there was a root-cellar that ought to have been at the cattle-barn, and ye had to take your roots in a basket from the horse-stable door and go the length of the barn and go down-

stairs and just go back the length of the barn again with them, to put them in the far corner, under the carriages; and, then, there was a manure cellar under the horses, and from that you had to throw the manure out of a little winder out of doors, and some of it yer had jist to throw three times over before you could get it the length of the cellar so as to throw it out of the window. An' then, the hay was pitched into a little winder at the end of the barn, and that you might carry the whole length of the barn when you fust begun to fill it up. An' then, the cattle barn, — I jist wish you could see that barn, — it was nigh as long as this, but the barn flure wasn't in the middle of it; there was a place for the cows at one end that was just big enough for them to stand in, and it was tight squeezing to go behint one of them, for their tails come nigh the boards, and their heads come into the barn flure; an' they eat off the flure, which wasn't as high as the flure they stood on by the half a foot, so that the cows got on their knees to ate. The other ind was for hay, an' a fine chance to carry hay to the far ind of that, too; but there was a bit place clear at the far end for the old open wagon that he kept for the farmer to ride in, an' the door of that was just an inch wider than the wagon, so that ye must be sober or yer would hit the side of the door when ye was drivin' in, an' the door wasn't high enough to get a kivered wagon in at all. An' then, yer could take yer horse out an' go round the barn into the yard, an' the horse-stall was in a shed, an' there was stalls there for some more cows, an' yer took hay from the barn flure through the yard, knee-deep in mud most of the time, to feed them cows; an' there was room for hay over them, an' that yer might throw out of the winder into the mud, or down where the wagon stood, and then carry it round. An' then, there was a barn-cellar under the end of the barn that was about three feet lower than the yard, an' that was about three feet deep in water most of the time, an' it took a good team to pull a load out of it, yer

may be sure. The boss wanted to know one time how I could make the barn more convanient to do the work in, an' I looked over it an' jist told him I thought the only way was to burn it down and build a new one, for sure iverything was hind ind foremost."

And after this lengthy harangue Mike looked as if he was still indignant at the thought of the unnecessary steps he had been obliged to take while there.

"I should think," said Bill, "that it must have been planned on purpose to be as inconvenient as possible."

"No," said Mike; "'twas planned to look well from his house; that was all. I'd as soon get a man that didn't know Ould Hundred from Yankee Doodle to build a pianner as one of them arkitix fellers to build a barn. Yer might make a pianner to look nice, Misther Giles, but maybe 'twouldn't have the right tune inside of it."

"This barn is well arranged for doing the work in, or will be when Clarence gets the other one put to it, as he calculates to have it next summer," said Bill.

"Well," said Jake, "he has had to do the work in a barn enough to know how he wanted it, and he knows that every step he can save in a road he must travel three or four times a day will save many miles in a year, and he likes to make every step and every stroke count."

Since the cellar was finished Jake and Mike and the others had been engaged in rebuilding a part of the old dam in the river, so as to raise the water some three feet, thus making a fall of about five feet, and in digging a trench from there through the barn-yard to the house. Luckily, the right to rebuild the dam had belonged to the farm, having been bought with it by my grandfather when he bought the farm, and it would not flow any land to much injury above our bog-meadow, as there was several small falls along the river. Mr. Rockwood was kind enough to order an hydraulic ram, and about two hundred feet of iron pipe from the city, and a

man came down to superintend the setting of the ram. A box some six inches square was made by Bill, in which the pipe was laid, and a load of sawdust brought from the mill, in which the pipe was packed. This box was laid three feet deep, and it was thought that depth and the packing would effectually protect it from the frost. A hydrant in the barn-yard supplied water to a trough there, and another was brought into the kitchen, so that we had a supply of soft water there, without the labor of going to the well for it. I confess that mother resisted this as a needless extravagance, but in a few months I think she would have rather perferred to part with the new barn than with the water, for it saved us many steps. But Clarence said it was most valuable for the cows, as it would save turning them down to the brook in winter, which sometimes was a severe journey for them, and not always a safe one, as there was risk of their slipping in an icy time and hurting themselves badly, besides that the cold winds and icy water often kept them shivering for hours after they came in. He meant before fall to so fix the trough that water should not freeze in it, he said; and he and Bill made, before he left, a double cover, which would shut closely over the trough. It was made double, with a packing of sawdust between the top and bottom, two inches thick, which Bill said cold air would never get through. This was put on the trough with hinges, so as to be in readiness for winter. The sides and ends of the trough were also inclosed in the same way at a small cost, and arrangements made to let the water run off in very cold nights, to further insure against accidental freezing.

During the time while this work was being done, Clarence had been obliged to take his men off several times to help about the hoeing and getting garden vegetables for his customer, but all was finished at last in time for cutting the second crop of hay. And this second crop was nearly as large as the first, especially from the fields upon the west side

of the road. He calculated that he had ten tons of oat-fodder and fifteen tons of hay in the old barn and sheds, besides about four tons of bog-hay stacked in the yard, and Jake estimated the second crop of hay at nearly ten tons more, but Clarence thought it would weigh less; but for feeding it might be called as good as ten tons of hay. The rye was also brought into the new barn and stored there in readiness for threshing when it came time for doing so. So crops matured and were harvested; more ground in the pasture was ploughed and sowed to rye; little pigs came and were sold, and two which were reserved from the spring's litter were fattened and killed, the three which were kept the previous fall having given us twenty pigs this fall, besides the twenty-three which were reared by the two old sows. The eight cows had given us an abundant supply of milk and butter through the summer and were still giving a liberal amount, being well supplied with corn-fodder, cabbage leaves and turnip leaves; the eight calves and the four heifers had thriven well, while our two cosset lambs were far superior even to any of the squire's. And so time crept on slowly at times, and again it flew swiftly by, even as we were looking ahead at the future or enjoying the present.

CHAPTER XVII.

But during all this time I have neglected our boarders, although they played no small part in our household economy, and their wants occupied not a little of my time. As I have said, they came to us in the latter part of May, and they remained until about the middle of November. Mrs. Benson and little Jessie were as pleasant and kind to us as before. Mrs. Vining was not always pleasant, as she was

a little given to fault-finding, and had much of the arrogant, self-asserting way which some rich people have, who fancy that everything can be bought for money, and who care little and are not accustomed to think of the needs or cares of their servants, and it was evident that she looked at us all as her servants, who had nothing to do but attend her call and supply her wants. Of course, we expected to do that which we were paid for doing, but it was not always as easy to do that which she commanded us to do as it would have been if we had been asked in a different manner. And she was very apt to expect other services from us at a time when all our attention was required upon the important subject of preparing the food. Add to this that she was all the time railing at the lack of conveniences to which she had been accustomed at home: because there was no library; because she could not find a particular shade of silk in that little store at the Corners; because the church was so small and the seats so hard; because there was no society; in short, because the country was not the city, and that she vented every fit of ill-humor upon the first one she met whom she dared to attack (for she stood in awe of her daughters), which was usually my mother or me, and you will acknowledge that she was not a pleasant mistress for the wife of a farmer who had usually been mistress in her own house.

Mrs. Rockwood was easier to please, if not more pleasant, and as she spent much time on the road in her carriage, and other time in reading or taking care of her little daughter (who was almost as disagreeable as her grandmother), we had but little trouble to take for her beyond preparing her meals. Miss Annie Vining rode, read, and slept by turns, and manifested about as much life and animation in one as the other. Miss Henrietta, on the contrary, was all animation; she rode with Mrs. Rockwood; she rode with Clarence, in the horse-wagon or ox-cart, though she could not be easy long riding with the oxen, for they were too slow; she

watched the men about their work; she tormented the calves and chased the pigs; she made the acquaintance of everybody in the neighborhood, all with a zeal and energy that was a torment to her mother and Miss Annie; to the former because she was not more ladylike; to the latter because it tired her, or seemed to, to watch anything which had more life than herself. Mr. Benson and Mr. Rockwood came every Saturday night. The former social and pleasant as ever, the latter grave and quiet, but improving upon acquaintance.

One Sunday evening, when there had been a heavy thunder-shower, I was sitting on the front stairs with Jessie in my lap, watching the sunset as it burst out in all its glory beneath the scattering clouds, when Mrs. Vining began, —

"I am glad that is over at last. It seems as if I never heard such thunder. If I get back to the city alive you will not catch me spending another summer in the country if I can have my way. Nothing but thunder, and rain, and wind, and fog, and blazing sunshine, and dust all the time."

"All of those all the time, mother?" asked Nettie, saucily laughing.

"Some one of them every day, or something else as disagreeable," said Mrs. Vining, with what I should have called a snap in her tone.

I was wondering what sort of weather would please her, if she thought all those that she had mentioned disagreeable, when I heard Mrs. Rockwood suggest, —

"You might go back to the city to-morrow morning with John, if you are so tired of remaining here, mother."

"Yes, I don't doubt you would be glad to get rid of me, and have me live in that great house all alone, and take care of it, and look after those saucy servants, while you enjoyed yourself, and Nettie ran wild through the fields here. She would be in the top of the apple trees next time, and break her neck the first I should know of her."

"That reminds me, ma," said Nettie, "I am sure there is

a robin's nest in the top of that great apple-tree, and I mean to go up to-morrow and see if there are any eggs in it."

"Nettie, don't do it," said Miss Annie; "just think how you will look up in that tree, a great girl as you are."

"Don't I look well anywhere?" laughed Nettie. "I wish you could have seen how I looked yesterday riding Mr. Hardy's old white horse in the cornfield. Mr. Hardy said I was 'handsome as a picter,' and I suppose I was."

"And who is Mr. Hardy?" asked her mother.

"He is the man that keeps the poor-house down here; just the jolliest man you ever saw — talks all the time, and doesn't give me a chance to say a word."

"What were you doing at the poor-house?" asked her sister.

"Wanted to see what it was like. You know mother used to say our extravagance would bring us to the poor-house, so I wanted to see if I could stand it when we came there. When I first went there Mr. Hardy was scolding at an awful rate at an old man, because he had not cut more wood; called him 'good for nothing, lazy-like,' and said he 'didn't earn the salt for his porridge,' and I don't remember the rest of it. I thought I had heard some scolding, but I never heard a man scold before, and I was listening, and the old man sat down on the wood-pile to listen and laugh, just as if he didn't care at all. And then a great, stout old woman opened the door and just said, 'Jack, water,' and he jumped as if he was scared, and went to drawing water as if at work for his life, and she kept him at it for two hours. But Mr. Hardy looked around and saw me and wanted to know what he could do for me, and I told him that I had come to see what a poor-house was like. So he showed me all over it, and talked all the time to me or somebody else, and when we came out I asked him what he should put me to doing if I was obliged to come there, and he said he 'guessed he should make me ride horse to harrow out the corn;' then I told him

that I wanted to try it and see how I liked it; so he put me on the horse and I rode till night, and jolly fun it was, too."

"I should think you would be ashamed, Henrietta," said her mother, peevishly.

"Why, didn't I hear last spring, before we came down, about the nice people around here? I want to get acquainted with them; I know some of them now. There is Mr. Hardy and Jake, and Mike, and old Mrs. Butts and her two gals, as she calls them. I want you to go there some day, Annie, and see what you and I will look like when we are old maids and live with ma, and keep cats and take snuff, and all that," and the little torment laughed, partly at the memory of the two sisters and partly, I thought, at the look of disgust which I knew was upon Annie's face.

And she had made the acquaintance not only of Mr. Hardy, but of every one else in the neighborhood; roaming about at will, and not at all bashful, she would do and say things which would have been called rude and unladylike in a country girl, yet she seemed to make every one like her with one exception, and that was our old friend Jake. One day when Jake had called at the kitchen upon some errand, she passed through and made some laughing remark to Jake, then stopped to pet Rover. When she went out Jake looked up to mother, saying, "Curious it is, ma'm, how different things seem to most folks, when the one that does 'em is dressed fine and looks stylish, or when it is somebody in rags and dirt. If one of the gals about here was to act as she does, folks would call her a saucy, spiteful, ill-mannered tomboy; but as it's a city miss she does as she pleases and every one is ready to laugh, and call her smart gal. It 'pears as if she bewitched them all."

"You are too severe, Jacob," said my mother; "she is only young, idle, and free from care, and it makes her as frolicsome as a kitten."

"That's just what she makes me think of," said Jake,

"and I never did like kittens. They frolic and play pretty enough when they are little, and purr around one as nice as can be; but by and by they are cats, and have sharp claws and cruel teeth, an' bite an' scratch an' torment everything that they can get their claws onto. I never see a cat that wouldn't steal, nor one that wasn't cruel, nor one that was true even to the best friend it had. This is a pretty kitten enough now, but she could torment a mouse if she got one in her power, and would scratch the hand that feeds her if the feed didn't come fast enough. If you don't believe that she's a cat, ma'am, just you watch Rover when she comes a-purrin' 'round him. Looks just as he does when Polly Butts tries to make her cat lie down side of him. He knows what's good manners too well to say a word in the house, but he looks about half 'shamed to have her so near him, half afraid that she'll scratch his face afore he knows it, and all over mad because he mustn't take her and shake her. That's just the way he looks at that gal, and I never saw him look so at no human bein'. You won't catch him waggin' his tail when she come nigh him, as he does for Miss Alice. I tell you a dog knows a cat on two legs as well as if they had four."

"I hope you and Rover are mistaken for once, Jacob," said my mother very gravely.

"I hope we are too," said Jake, "for the sake of the mice; but I never knew Rover to get mistaken. I might be, but I would risk my life on him. So if you set any store by your mice just keep them out of her clutches, if you can. If you don't she'll play with them awhile, and then they'll feel her claws and teeth." And with the last word he quietly walked off.

I do not know what effect Jake's words had upon my mother, but they created a misgiving in my mind that was not easily dispelled. It was impossible to mistake the meaning of Jake's significant warning, for the pleasure which Clarence felt in Miss Nettie's society was plain for us all to observe, and as he was now a fine, manly lad of eighteen, I

acknowledge that I had built some air-castles in regard to them. I could not say that I really *liked* Nettie, but I admired her exceedingly, and as she appeared to have as much fondness for Clarence's society as he had for hers, I had thought it possible that some time in the distant future, when we should have paid that mortgage and improved the farm so as to make it a suitable residence for such a fine lady, then I might be called upon to welcome her as a sister. But was she as fond of him as she seemed? Would she play with him and torment him as a cat does a mouse? I tried to talk with mother about it, but could get no satisfaction from her. "You are not old enough to think of such things, Alice, and it is of no use for you to worry your head about Jake's nonsense. He is very likely mistaken, and if not, I hope Clarence is old enough and wise enough to take care of himself, or he must learn the lesson that other people have had to learn." This was all she would say to me about it, but I felt very sure she had a long talk with Clarence that night after I was sent to bed, for I could see that he rather avoided Nettie after that, and that he watched her closely when in her company. But much of this had worn off by the first of October, when George Benson and Henry Farnham joined us. Mr. Benson and Mr. Rockwood also remained with us much of the time after they came, only making occasional trips to the city to attend to business.

Now, the gay, romping Nettie appeared at times in a new character. Although I was too busy to watch her very closely, I could see that she endeavored to attract favorable notice from Henry. She read his books, although I had not seen her take a book in hand since she came until Henry came. She walked with him and talked to him to the utter neglect of Clarence, for a while, although I thought he had little liking for her society. Then, for a change, she neglected him and devoted herself to Clarence more attentively than before; I could not fail to perceive that Clarence was ready

to come or go at her bidding, although there was lingering mistrust in his mind, which had been raised by the words of my mother or Jake. I was confident that Jake had spoken to him at least as plainly as he had to my mother, for he was not one to see a friend going into danger without giving a warning, though he disliked to speak unfavorably of any one who had never wronged him. But Clarence was not one to be turned from his course by the opinion of others. If he had fallen in love with this girl he would not be turned from her by warning, though he might wait years before putting his fate to the test.

Do not, dear reader, sneer at the love of a boy of eighteen as "puppy love," as I have heard some do. It is in childhood that we form the purest and most enduring affections of our life, and if in boyhood and youth and early manhood one loves some person whom he afterward learns to look upon with different feelings, it is because the one so loved proves not what his fancy painted. We love people not always for what they are, but for what we think them, and if they suddenly reveal their true characters to us, they are as strangers. Love will outlive great changes in the loved one, if they are only so gradual as to allow us to become accustomed to them. But, I repeat, no love is so enduring as the first, the earliest love.

But during the stay of our boarders things did not change between Clarence and Nettie. If she cared for his society she sought it and he showed that he was pleased. If she turned the cold shoulder to him neither look nor word showed that he felt that he had a right to resent it, and if it wounded him, none knew it. This brother of mine was proud, and I think Nettie herself knew not whether he felt her neglect or not. But my mother and I knew that he liked her well, and if he felt no pain at her fickle treatment it was because he doubted whether her fits of indifference were not the result of maidenly modesty.

CHAPTER XVIII.

At last our boarders were gone. At the end Nettie had been gracious, and earnestly invited Clarence and me to visit her at home during the winter. Mr. Benson and his wife had also invited us, but mother had made no promises, and Ned's and mine were dependent upon mother's consent. After they went the harvesting was soon finished, and we prepared again for our Thanksgiving dinner, at which we knew we might expect to receive from Clarence an account of the past year's successes. We knew that we had been successful in getting something more than a living, but it was to him that we looked for a detailed account of the various ways and means by which it had been accomplished. He had been very busy for a few weeks past, selling and carrying away his winter vegetables, or such of them as were marketable, and putting into the new root cellar all those which were to be kept for our own use or for feeding to the cows. He had paid off all the labor bills, and had settled the account at the store, but we knew not how much money he had left, if any, although mother had handed over to him the money which had been received for board. But he had his account ready for inspection: —

On hand at last Thanksgiving	$377 75
Rec'd for chickens and fowls	864 40
Eggs	382 10
Pigs	288 00
Strawberries, currants, etc.	216 40
Peas, beans, sweet-corn, etc.	36 70
Onions	37 50
Cabbages	183 80
Amount carried forward,	$2,386 65

Amount brought forward,	$2,386 65	
Rec'd for 210 bush. turnips	144 50	
70 bush. potatoes	42 00	
1,170 lbs. butter	292 50	
12 tons rye-straw	120 00	
110 bush. rye	77 00	
		$3,062 65
Board		1,352 00
		$4,414 65
Paid for superphospate and ashes	$95 50	
Lumber, boards, and glass for hen-house	84 60	
Carpenter's labor for hen-house	18 00	
Lumber and boards, etc., for barn	643 75	
Carpenter's labor for barn	165 00	
Mike's labor	360 63	
Other labor, including Mrs. Murphy, girls in berries, etc.	143 80	
Ram and pipes	84 00	
Labor and expense of man to setting	11 50	
Blacksmith's bill, etc.	32 50	
Groceries	566 90	
Fresh meat, fish, etc.	233 40	
Grain bill, scraps for hens, hogs, etc.	382 70	
Seeds and tools, strawberry boxes and crates	134 65	
Interest	36 00	
Taxes	56 40	
Clothing, household utensils	83 50	
		3,132 83
Balance on hand		$1,281 82

"And have we really almost thirteen hundred dollars on hand?" asked my mother, who had listened to the reading of this statement in evident amazement.

"We have, if you will accept this paper as proof of five hundred dollars of it," said Clarence, as he passed her a folded paper.

"The mortgage!" I exclaimed as soon as I saw it.

"Yes, that is the mortgage. I thought I would pay it, as

I saw that I was likely to have money enough left after paying it to make such improvements as I want to make this winter and next spring. I paid it when I paid the squire what I borrowed of him to build the barn."

"What do you mean to do with the rest of the money?" she asked.

"There is almost eight hundred dollars now. I am going to build an ice-house, or rather a place to keep ice for our own use, and a suitable milk-room. I do not like this keeping milk in the cellar in summer time, and I mean to have a place just to suit me. Then, there is the old barn to move and alter next spring, after the hay is out of it, and I want a steam-apparatus to steam feed for cows. All this will take money."

"As you please; I do not feel that I have any claim on this money, and I am well pleased to have this mortgage paid," said my mother. "I am willing to consider all the rest as yours, and I am sure that you have done well, both of you, to accomplish so much in less than two years."

"But you know, mother," said Clarence, "that it is all yours, for I am not of age yet, but we are working for you; and then you and Alice have earned as much as Ned and I, by taking boarders. If it had not been for what you received in that way I should not have made much more than last year. Now I can sell the old oxen, which are fat enough to kill, and get another pair that will gain enough this winter to pay for their keeping, as I have not much work for them to do, and with my hay and corn-fodder I can keep more stock than I have now, so I mean to buy three more cows, if I can find them to suit me, and as I have fattened the old cow and shall kill her, that will give us fourteen cows next year, if the four heifers all calve and do well. So you can see that we actually need a milk-house."

"I suppose you have planned it all out," said my mother, with a laugh.

"Certainly, and have engaged Bill Giles to come next week, and told him to get the lumber for it," said Clarence.

Sure enough, the next week the lumber came, and Bill was at work upon it. You may remember that I told you that we had a porch at the north-east corner of the house, in which was a wash-room and a wood-house. The new building was to be put on the north end of it. When it was finished you could pass from the old kitchen, which was destined now to be a dining-room in the summer, into a kitchen in the porch, which was finished where the wash-room and part of the wood-house had been; beyond this, going north, you entered a wood-house, with a large agricultural steamer in it at the end next the kitchen; from this steam was carried by iron-pipes under ground to the floor of the old barn, for the purpose of steaming food for the cattle; a branch also went to the watering-trough, and as a simple arrangement controlled the steam so that it could be sent either way, it was possible to warm the water in the trough for the cows as well as to steam the hay. Beyond the wood-house was the milk-room, which Clarence said cost him more thought and more money than anything of its size upon the farm. As I have never seen another like it, I wish to be particular in describing it. From the wood-house going north, you passed out upon a piazza four feet wide and eighteen long, from which a door entered into a room ten feet wide and eight feet long (counting the length as going the long way of the building), from which a door on the east passed out to another piazza of the same size as that on the west side. This room had a churn and a butter-worker (for which Clarence sent to the manufacturer's), a large table and a sink; there was a window upon each side, and, as the door was half glass, it was well lighted. On the north side of the room a door gave admittance to the milk-room. This was ten feet square, and was furnished with patent pans, four of them, each capable of holding the milk of twenty-five cows when full. The floor of

this room was three feet below the other room, and was of cement. As there were two windows upon each side, opening upon the piazzas, this was also light enough, but no sun could shine directly in except early in the morning, or late in the evening. But one of the main features was the roof. These two rooms were roofed over entirely independent of the roof of the main building, which was the piazza roof, thus leaving room for a free circulation of air between the outer roof and the roof of the milk and butter rooms, as they were called. There were ventilators opened from each room into the space between the two rooms, and one on the outer roof, which was not just above either of the inner ventilators. This was all arranged that the milk and butter rooms might be cool in summer. That they might be warm in winter, another arrangement was made: closely-fitted boards were arranged in sections, so that they could be placed between the posts of the piazzas, with windows and doors opposite to those within, so that it left them as rooms within a room. A branch of the steam-pipe which went to the barn was led into these inner rooms, so that at any time they could be heated if necessary, and steam could be used for scalding milk-pails, pans, churn, or anything else that needed it. He also made a connection with the water-pipe which led to the house, so that water might be drawn at the sink in the butter-room, or allowed to run around the milk-pans when necessary to cool the milk. Beyond the milk-room was the ice-house, eighteen feet wide and fifteen long, with double walls, filled with sawdust and shavings from the mill. This had only a door at the north end. Small holes in the end near the peak of the roof allowed for ventilation. None of these buildings, or rooms rather, for it was all one building and a continuation of the old porch, were built in anything more than the plainest manner, but of good stock. While Bill was at work upon it, Clarence had exchanged our fat oxen for lean ones, receiving forty dollars difference; had killed and salted the fat cow;

had killed the three fat pigs and sold thirty-five dollars worth of pork from them, besides salting enough to last us a year, for we were not great eaters of pork; had bought three more cows, and also had bought forty young sheep of the squire. Had also bought a quantity of grain and beef-scraps to feed cows, hogs, and hens, that he might save our corn till later in the year. When the building was finished, and boxes and troughs made in the barn for steaming feed for cattle, he astonished me one evening by declaring that he was nearly out of money, and yet owed Bill Giles over an hundred dollars.

"What are you going to do for money?" asked mother.

"I think I can get along with the little that I have until I can get some more for eggs or butter. Bill does not feel in any hurry for his pay, as he has been doing very well lately, and he would be just as well satisfied to have it in my hands and draw interest on it as to have the money now, he says," said Clarence.

"I think William has improved very much since he first began to work here," said mother.

"He has. He says he has not taken a glass of liquor for over a year, and doesn't want it at all, and he works steadily and saves money, and I think his wife is much more help to him about doing so than she was two years ago," answered Clarence, "and for that he thinks he is indebted to you."

"What do you intend to do this winter?" I asked.

"The care of the stock and hens, and helping make the butter, and getting home wood, and getting ready for the spring work will take up my time and Mike's pretty closely, you may be sure," he answered. "I intend to go to Boston a few days before long to look after some new tools that I shall want next year, but I cannot be away long for there is too much to look after here."

"You may stay as long as you please," said Ned; "Mike and I can take care of the stock."

"Thank you, but I do not need to stay long," he replied.

"Before I go I must get the cows to having steamed feed and see if we can make a little butter. We ought to with steamed feed and grain, and a good milk-room to keep milk in."

After that, every morning the fire was lighted under the steamer before they went to the barn. By the time they had milked and attended to the other chores, the corn-fodder in the steam-box was well steamed, and then the steam was turned on a pipe which led to the tub in which he kept feed for the hogs, and while that was getting warm they were mixing grain with the warm, moist corn-fodder and feeding the cows. Then the hogs were fed, and the steam turned upon the watering-trough, so that by the time the cows had finished their breakfast they were let out to drink the warm water. At noon they had a feed of hay which was not cut, and in the afternoon the steamer was put at work again in about the same order as in the morning, excepting that they were fed and watered before being milked, and they had another feed of long hay after milking.

"Sure," said Mike, "it is Christians they must think they are, wid their hot breakfasts and their hot tay in the trough."

"Well, Mike," said Ned, "they pay for it like Christians, don't they?"

And they did pay for it, I think, for such quantities of milk from cows at that season of the year, and such thick, yellow cream upon it, mother said she had never seen before. And the butter was very near as good color as we had made in the summer; good enough, at any rate, so that the storekeeper said he would take all that we had to spare, and pay as much as he had in the summer, or a little more. Nor was the increase in milk and butter the only advantage of the warm food and drink, for the cows, although well-fed and taken care of in previous winters, had never looked so smooth and fat as they soon began to after the steamer was put to work. Clarence said they eat much less corn-fodder and hay than they did last winter. The hogs also were thriving well,

and the sheep, although they did not get steamed food, yet seemed most grateful for their turn at the trough of warm water, and we expected to have a fine lot of lambs and wool to sell from them. The pullets furnished a liberal supply of eggs all winter, and, in February, Clarence began again to prepare for his early chickens. But it was in January that Clarence made his visit to Boston, and although some business was to be attended to, yet I thought the hope of seeing Nettie had a strong influence in determining him to attend to it in person instead of writing or entrusting it to Mr. Benson. When he returned he was very free in describing his kind reception by Mr. and Mrs. Benson, and the sights he had seen, and the business he had done, but not a word about Nettie until I inquired if he had seen her.

"Yes, I met her on the street near Mr. Rockwood's one day," he answered, coolly, as if it were the most ordinary thing to have met her.

"Did she seem pleased to see you?" I asked, a little maliciously I acknowledge, for I knew by his manner that he cared not to say much about it.

"Perhaps she was," he said, "but she looked at me as if she did not know me at first, until I spoke to her, and then she recognized me, and inquired after you all, and the neighbors, and wanted to know why I didn't get Jake or Uncle Tom Hardy to come with me, she should so like to see them staring about them and into the shop-windows, and see how their country fashions would look in the city, and then she and the young lady that was with her laughed, as if the idea was something very comical, and I thought it might be that I was showing them a specimen of country fashions as laughable to them as Uncle Tom Hardy would, so I wished them good-day, and left them. I made up my mind that any one who could laugh at Uncle Tom Hardy or Jake, because they had not lived in the city and learned city manners, was too fashionable to be seen upon the street in the city with me;

and if that is city manners I think I like country manners better," and my brother started to the barn to examine the stock there, hoping for a better welcome from them than he had received from Nettie. After he went out mother simply said, "It may be bitter for him, but I hope it will be wholesome." I certainly felt indignant against her, but reflection convinced me that she had been pleasant and polite while she was with us, and it might be that I had been foolish to think that she had intended to be more than that, and as Clarence did not seem to feel very badly about his reception after the first bitter remark that he had made, I soon hoped that he had felt less strongly attracted toward her than I had supposed. I ventured once to express to him a part of my indignation at her not having given him a more cordial reception, but he laughed, and with a pull at my ear, said, "You know, sis, Jake says she is a kitten, and kittens have short memories for their friends, and besides that you must remember that with some people friends are like coats, — those which are nice and comfortable in the woods are not such as we want to exhibit in society. I have no fault to find, for I know I was out of style among her fine friends. If she come back here next summer I dare say we shall be good friends again."

CHAPTER XIX.

"Well, Mrs. Reynolds," said Jake, as he came in one night in January, as we sat in the new kitchen, "I thought I would just drop in and see if you had got too proud with your new buildings to speak to your poor neighbors."

"I am very proud of them, Jake, and proud of my boys for earning them and fixing them so nicely, but I think I shall treat the neighbors just as well as before," said my mother, laughing.

"We certainly shall not get too proud to speak to you, Jake," said Clarence, "for you know you gave me my first recommendation as farm manager."

"So I did, and safe enough I was in doin' it, as far as I've seen the way you have managed; but I want to see what new wrinkles you have in view, for I've heard down at the Corners that you've fixed up like it never was fixed up in these parts before. They say that you've got a machine now that you turn all your milk into one spout and it comes out of two spouts at the t'other end — one spout for butter just as yaller as gold, and t'other for skimmed milk and buttermilk. Jones told me, and showed me some of the butter to prove it, and sure enough, it was as handsome as ever I laid eyes on at any time of year."

"Not quite as convenient as that yet, Jacob," said my mother, as Clarence laughed at this exaggerated description of his labor-saving machinery in the milk-room; "but if Clarence could have found such a machine, I suppose he would have bought it."

"Well, that's what they said, and that you had got a steam-engine that fed the cows and milked them, and pipes laid to bring the milk right into the house, so that you don't do anything only set and tend the fire, and when it comes out pleasant, go off and sell the butter."

"Is that all they had to tell, Jake?" asked Clarence.

"Well, that's about all I stopped to hear; thought I had better come and see for myself," said Jake.

"You shall see it all before you leave if you will come out with me, by and by; but you will not see anything so very wonderful," answered Clarence.

"That's just what I want," said Jake, and just then we heard some one else entering, and to our surprise it proved to be Uncle Thomas and Aunt Cynthia.

After the salutations of the evening had been exchanged, Uncle Thomas asked Jake, "What is the news?"

"Well, no great," he answered; "only old Mrs. Butts is pretty low, and I reckon it's doubtful if the old lady stands it a great while. I went in there when I came along, and she seems mighty feeble. Don't set up much, and looks miserable; can't eat nothing much; and, fact is, I guess she don't have just what sick folks ought to eat, anyway. Johnny-cake and pork and potatoes are very good for a man to work on, but I don't reckon they are exactly fit for a sick woman, and she has got tired of porridge; says the gals can't make it right, though I guess it don't taste right because she is sick; for Polly wanted me to taste of it, and I thought it was first-rate. But I was thinking that if some of you women that know how to fix up kinder nice little messes would jist carry in some little thing that would sorter relish to her, or go there and cook up somethin', it might do the old lady a power of good," and Jake looked as if he had been begging for himself.

"Certainly; I will go down and see her to-morrow, and I think I can get her something that she can eat," said my mother.

"And you, too, Mrs. Cynthia?" asked Jake. "I know you used to be a master hand for cooking up nice notions and for making the best jellies and sich things."

"I don't know as I can make anything as nice as Helen can, for I haven't been cooking for city folks," said Aunt Cynthia with a little sneer, for she prided herself on her abilities in that line — a weakness which Jake had skilfully flattered by his remarks; "but I will try to send in something."

"Well, now," said Jake, "I reckon it is kind of you both, but you know she would do as much for you if you was sick and she could get about. She used to be a good hand to call in in case of sickness; was called worth a dozen doctors when babies was sick."

"What doctor does she have?" asked Uncle Thomas.

"Don't have any, and says she won't; says there is just one disease that there ain't any yarbs will cure, nor doctor's stuff, either, and that is just what ails her now."

"What is that, Jake?" I asked.

"That's the disease that you won't have for sixty years to come, young lady, though your mother and I begin to look for it pretty soon. It's old age, and I reckon that's the disorder that we should all die of, if we lived as we ought to. I don't know, though, as Mrs. Cynthia ever will have it, for I don't see as she grows old a bit for the last twenty years."

"But I am sure I feel old enough," said Aunt Cynthia, with a pleased smile, as if conscious of being a well-preserved woman of over fifty years old. "I think, though, that Thomas shows his age more than I do."

"Well," said Jake, "it stands to reason as he should, for I expect you are too busy to grow old. You don't stop to think about it; but he hasn't much else to think of when he is at work in that shop. I don't calculate it is a fit place for any man to work in all winter, doubled up like a half-shet jack-knife, over an old boot. Better be in the wood along with me, or in the barn with Clarence, taking care of the cows or puttering about the hens and pigs."

"I have been thinking that I did not know but it would be best for me to come and work for Clarence as a sort of apprentice, until I had learned to manage a farm as well as he does, and then I might try if I could make a living on my own farm. He seems to beat us all," said Uncle Thomas with a sigh.

"Lots of farmers might learn of him, I reckon," said Jake; "for he not only does the work he has learned to do, but he thinks a bit for himself and figures out the best way to do what he has to do. The difference between the best way and the poorest way is what makes the profit."

"I don't know but he makes a profit," said Aunt Cynthia; "but what is the use of that, if he spends it all as fast as he makes it? Seems to me it must have cost a dreadful sight of money since he took the farm — so much build-

ing, and fixing up, and hiring help, and buying that stuff to put on the land, and buying so much grain, and all that."

"But the farm has paid for it all, Aunt Cynthia," said Clarence, "and is now in shape to pay for more improvements when I want them."

"What more improvements do you want, unless it is to paint up the old house and fix it a little?" she asked.

"I have considerable more to do yet, and I mean to do it as fast as I can pay for it," he answered.

"Well, I suppose you think you know best, but I should put some of the money where I could get it when I wanted it, and where it would draw a little interest, if I was manager," she said.

"I think it pays better interest to put it in the land than it would if in the bank," said Clarence. "Now I get a good interest for land and money too, but if I put the money in the bank the land would not pay anything."

"You have not seen our new rooms in the porch yet, have you, Cynthia?" asked my mother for the sake of changing the conversation.

"I have not, but I would like to; for I have heard that it is something wonderful nice and handy," she said.

"It is not so very nice, but it is very convenient, and I am pleased with it; for it shows that Clarence wants to make his mother's work easy, as well as his own."

Then, after exhibiting the new sink in the room we were in, with its pipe for bringing in soft water, and its convenient rack for draining dishes on when washed, and the slide-door for passing dishes through into the pantry, we went into the wood-room, where the steam-kettle stood, and Clarence explained its use and the benefit of having warm food and drink for the cows and hogs. Then into the alleyway in front of the milk and butter rooms (which in warm weather could be made a pleasant piazza) and into the butter-room, where the

new churn and butter-worker were critically examined. As there was a quantity of butter there from the last churning which had not been sent away, Aunt Cynthia exclaimed at its excellent color.

"That is in part owing to the cows being Alderney, part to good feed, and part to a good place to keep the milk, but that is not all," said Clarence; "when I was in Boston I bought a little of the stuff folks used to color cheese with, which they call annatto or annotto, and I steep a little of that and color the salt with it, so that it will be about the color of brown sugar. That makes the butter always just one color, as near as need be, for the working the salt in works the color in too."

"I should be afraid it was pizen, or that it would make the butter taste bad," said Aunt Cynthia.

"It is warranted not to contain anything that will hurt anybody, and as for the taste, I think it tastes a little better for it. Mother cannot tell the difference between that which is colored and that which is not, with her eyes shut, but I can tell which I get the first time trying," said Clarence.

"Yes; the first time," laughed Ned, "but not the second time."

"No; after I have tasted of one kind, I cannot tell the difference again until the taste gets fairly out of my mouth," he said.

"Here is some that is not colored," said my mother. "This was a part of the same churning, but was salted by itself with salt that was not colored."

"That is good-looking winter butter," said Aunt Cynthia; "but the other looks almost like June butter."

"Taste of the light-colored first, and then of the other," said Clarence.

She did so, and so did Uncle Thomas and Jake.

"I declare," said Aunt Cynthia, "I believe the yellow butter does taste the most like grass butter. I am afraid you

are playing a trick on me, and that is butter that you made last summer."

"Ask mother, if you can't believe me," said Clarence, with a laugh at the suspicion of our aunt. Mother assured her that it was as Clarence had said.

"Well," said she, "I own up that the yellow butter tastes the best and looks the best, but I should rather have the other, that hadn't anything in it that I did not know about. It may be a foolish notion, and perhaps I should get over it if I had used the stuff a while."

Then we passed into the milk-room, where they all examined, with much curiosity, the new pans which held the milk. Aunt Cynthia liked them, it being so little trouble to wash them and to draw off the milk from them after skimming; while Clarence explained the arrangements by which he hoped to keep an even temperature there both summer and winter, never being too hot or too cold for the milk to keep sweet or the cream to rise well. Then he went with Jake and Uncle Thomas to examine the ice-house, while the rest of us returned to the house. When they came in, Jake was saying, —

"Farmin' now aint what it was when you and I were boys, Thomas. If a man has money to buy tools with, just the best there is in the market, a boy, or a lazy man like me, can do more than two smart men used to. He can ride round, and mow his grass and rake it, and stand in the wagon while the horse puts it into the mow, and not lay out as much strength as we used to in swinging the scythe one forenoon, besides doing as much again of it. His ploughs and his hoes, and most all his tools, are as light as playthings side of them they had fifty years ago. His cows make more butter, his hogs make more pork and eat less corn, and I don't see no reason why he can't make money now, if folks then could make a living."

"But all these things cost so much money," said Aunt Cynthia. "This steaming your hay, and these new things

in the milk-room, now, are very nice; but what have they cost, and will they pay?"

"I suppose," said Clarence, "that the first cost of the buildings and machinery there will be not far from six or seven hundred dollars, including ice-house. I could tell exactly if it were not for the other work in this room. But we will call it seven hundred dollars; interest and repairs we will call ten per cent., and it will cost not more than thirty dollars to run the steam all winter, which will be an hundred dollars a year. Now, we have been making about two hundred pounds of butter to a cow, at twenty-five cents a pound, which is fifty dollars. I mean now to make two hundred and fifty pounds to a cow, if I can, and I hope to get forty cents a pound for the butter, which will be just an hundred dollars to a cow, and on the fourteen cows that I shall have this year, will be seven hundred dollars more than we got from them before. That is what I am trying for. But you see that if I make thirty pounds more to a cow and sell at the old price, I shall make it pay. Besides that, it does not take so much fodder to keep the cows fat as it did before we began steaming it, and I think that saving, with the saving of work to mother, will pay the cost of running the steamer. She can tell you how much more milk the cows give than they did before, and how much easier the butter comes."

"She has been telling me," said Aunt Cynthia; "but it seems scarcely possible that you can make as much as you calculate on."

"Clarence figures pretty shrewdly," said Jake, "or he couldn't have paid for all these things and paid the mortgage in two years. That's what I call the real test of farming. I allow now that this farm is actually worth, with the stock and tools on it, at least three thousand dollars more than it was when Clarence took it, and that's a pretty good show for two years, though I know that Mrs. Reynolds and the gal have helped it along amazingly with their boarders."

"We have been willing and glad to help," said my mother; "but the boys have made more than we have, for after taking out the cost of their food it does not leave a very great profit."

"For my part," said Uncle Thomas, "I must say that I can't see how you have done it. I guess I shall have to come to you to learn."

"If you think you can learn anything from me, Uncle Thomas, I will give you a chance to learn, and pay you for it, besides," said Clarence. "I have been thinking for some time that if I could find some one to attend to the chores whom I could trust to do them as I want them done, or as I would do them myself, it would allow me to do more work on the farm. It would be light work, just suited to you, and I could pay as much for it as I would for harder work."

"What would I have to do?" asked Uncle Thomas.

"Help milk in the morning and at night, feed and water cows, calves, sheep, horses, and hens. Take care of chickens and calves, if we raise more this year, as I intend to. Help mother churn and work butter. If you have any spare time after all that you can do hoeing or other light work; but I want somebody who will do all of that every day, so that Mike and Ned and I need not be bothered with it."

Very much to my surprise, Uncle Thomas seemed to like the idea, and Aunt Cynthia encouraged him in it, and a bargain was made by which he was to begin in March and work a year, simply reserving the privilege of staying away a few days when he wished to, to take care of his own garden and cut his grass. He intended to sell all but a cow and pig and put all his land into grass. So now we had two hired men, or would have in the spring, for Mike was already engaged for the next year and was to be kept busy through the winter. Nor did there seem to be any lack of business for them, for Clarence was busy with Mike and Ned every day, draw-

ing wood and fitting it for the stove, drawing out manure and drawing in mud when the weather allowed, drawing sand, mending and painting wagons and tools in rainy days.

CHAPTER XX.

When the spring opened, work began in earnest, for Clarence had determined upon certain improvements which he intended to make early in the year, even if he was not ready to pay for them as soon as completed, which had been his custom heretofore. But having obtained the reputation of a prompt and sure paymaster, and having a sure prospect of receiving money early in the season from the sale of chickens, pigs, berries, eggs, and butter, besides the prospect of boarders, he felt justified in finishing his changes as early as he could.

The first job undertaken was the long-talked of one of clearing off the rocks in the field back of the barn, the four-acre field, and setting out an orchard there. Jake's services were obtained to assist in the drilling and blasting of the rocks, at which he was an expert. Luckily the rocks were mostly small boulders, and it was not so large an undertaking as it looked. Soon it was finished, and the next thing was the measuring and marking for the trees, and digging the holes. Extra labor was engaged for this, for time began to be precious, and there were many holes to dig. He had planned for one hundred and twenty apple trees, thirty pear trees, and ten cherry trees. These were all of the large growing varieties and were set two rods apart. Among them, and one rod apart from each other and from the larger trees, were forty dwarf pear trees, forty of the smaller growing cherries, eighty quinces, forty plums, and two hundred and eighty peach trees.

Thus upon the four acres were to be set six hundred and forty trees. He hoped to get crops enough from the smaller trees before the apple and other large trees were grown so as to interfere with them, so that he could afford to cut them down if it became necessary. The cherries and plums were put at the edge of the field next the hennery; the quinces upon the low ground toward the river. Between the outer row and the wall were set an hundred grape vines, and about ten dozen of blackberries and raspberries, while currants and gooseberries were set to the number of twenty-five dozen between the rows of trees running north and south along the edge of the field next the barn, three currants or gooseberries being put between each two trees.

Although this filled but a small part of the rows, Clarence said it was as many as he desired to put in this year, though he might fill all the rows another year if he thought best, either by buying more plants or by taking cuttings from those which he had. While the others were digging the holes for the trees, Clarence, having obtained the company of the squire, went to a large and well-known nursery, and they not only selected their trees, but saw that they were carefully taken up and handled, and properly packed for transportation. The squire's judgment and advice was invaluable to him, he said, and not only that, but by his influence he was able to get his trees at a much lower price on account of taking so many; but even then he found that his orchard had cost him nearly four hundred dollars besides the labor which he and Ned, Mike and Uncle Thomas had done.

While this work was being done, Bill Giles had been at work again on the house. He had put in new windows of a larger and more modern style; had finished the rooms in the attic, and had built a piazza along the front or west side, and another across the north end of the house which connected with that upon the west side of the milk-room. When this was finished, a gang of men from Staniford came on and

painted the house and the new barn, and put on new green blinds. The house was not painted white, but a sort of brown with the trimmings a shade darker. When it was all finished I could not help thinking we looked as stylish, outside, at least, as any of our neighbors.

This cost Clarence nearly three hundred and fifty dollars, and mother was a little inclined to look at it as mostly unnecessary expense; but Clarence said we owed it to ourselves and our coming boarders to look a little smarter than we had done, and as he began to talk about new carpets and furniture, mother was glad to compromise by saying nothing against the work on the buildings if he would not refurnish for another year at least, nor then, unless he could afford to do it without running in debt. We had already the offer of more boarders than we had house-room for, all those who were there the previous summer excepting Mrs. Vining, who had gone to live with a brother (for which I certainly was not sorry), having engaged to come again in May. Her place, and that of George Benson and Henry Farnham, were taken by Mr. and Mrs Harris and the two Misses Dunbar — the latter two, maiden ladies of very uncertain age, the former two a retired merchant and wife. He had been brought up on a farm, but had spent fifty years in trade, and now desired to spend his summer quietly in the country, and his winter in the city, without care or anxiety, he said, excepting in regard to the flavor of his coffee and the crispness of his toast. This insured us an income from boarders of sixty-nine dollars a week. Before they came Clarence requested Mr. Benson to order for us a supply of groceries from the wholesale store in the city, his venture in that way last year having proved most favorable.

But the farming was still to be carried on, and as soon as the orchard was finished it was planted to potatoes. Two acres of the five around the house were put in garden vegetables, and the other three in field-corn. The old garden

across the road was now entirely in strawberries and other small fruits. Then, a ten-acre field in the pasture was ploughed and three tons of superphosphate were harrowed in there, and an acre and a half of it set to cabbages; two and a half being sowed to turnips, and the rest, six acres, being put in corn.

The orchard and the house-field had been liberally manured with manure from the yards; but Clarence had also bought all the ashes he could get and used them in the hills for potatoes and around the hills of corn and upon the garden when hoeing. The hens had given us liberally of eggs; the pigs (of which we had five litters or forty-eight pigs) had been sold, and, as Clarence said, was not enough to supply the demand, for his pigs had a great reputation. There were about five hundred chickens growing and fifty-three lambs, all thrifty; while the cows and heifers were likely to supply us with calves to raise and milk to take care of as much as we should want to attend to.

But before anything was done about planting the eight-acre field the care of the farm had been given up to Ned and Mike for a while, for Clarence was again engaged with Bill Giles in moving and fixing up the old barn. A place had been prepared for it upon the east side of the new barn, joining the south-east corner, by building an underpinning for it and filling the space inside with coarse gravel. This place was made twenty-eight feet wide, the width of the old barn, and fifty feet long. The old barn was moved upon the east end of this, and a new piece twenty feet long, and of the same width as the old barn, was built to connect it with the new barn. This building, which was to be the cattle-barn, thus stood at right angles with the hay-barn, and as the latter was only eighteen feet wide south of the drive-way, and it was not desired to bring the north side of the cattle-barn quite parallel with the south side of the east entrance to the hay-barn, it was joined on for sixteen feet, thus leaving

twelve feet of the west end of the cattle-barn uncovered by the hay-barn.

The floor was taken out of the old barn and a floor laid over the scaffold beams, thus leaving ample room to stand erect in the cow stables, which a man could not do before. When the cattle barn was finished you could pass from the drive-way of the hay barn into the alleyway at the south-east corner, and, passing through the first door, you entered into the horse stables behind the horses. There were three stalls, each three and a half feet wide, and two box stalls, each four and a half feet wide, which could also be used for sick cows or calves when not needed for horses. Beyond the horses you entered into a cow stable where there was room for ten cows. All stood with their heads toward the middle of the barn. By another door from the same alleyway you entered the alleyway between the cows' heads, which was four feet wide, and went the whole length of the barn.

On the south side was another cow-stable, with room for fifteen cows or oxen. This stable, as the other, was twelve feet wide. Both stables could be entered from the central alleyway by a narrow passage at either end. The floor was made of cement, and was made highest in the centre, and a gutter next the underpinning conducted all the water into a pipe which emptied outside into a hole dug on purpose to receive it. This hole was kept partly filled with sand or dry earth. The whole was well lighted by windows on the south, east, and west. Each stall for horses and cows had a separate floor made of three pieces of joist just as long as the stall was wide, of different thicknesses, so that, placed upon the slanting floor, the upper sides were level. These were covered with narrow strips of plank, so placed, with cracks between them, as to allow all liquid to fall through it to the floor beneath.

This, at the front end, run under the mangers in such a way that it could be pushed in or pulled out to accommodate the

length of the animal standing on it, or it could be raised or removed entirely, for the purpose of cleaning the floor underneath. The cows were confined by stanchions, one of which was stationary at one side of the cow's neck, and the other swung on a pivot at the lower end. When in place — where it was held by a catch — it held the cow's neck securely. Their mangers were raised a foot above the floor upon which they stood, and each manger in the cow stables hung upon hinges, to admit of their being easily turned over into the alleyway, which uncovered a trough of water beneath.

By this arrangement, the next winter, the corn-fodder or hay was cut and steamed in the floor of the hay barn, and then, when mixed with grain, was taken upon a truck along this alleyway and carried in and fed to the cows. While they were eating, the steam was let into a trough of water, — which I will speak of hereafter, — and when they had eaten their feed, the water, about blood-warm, was let into the troughs, and the mangers turned over to allow the cows to drink; thus there was no need of turning them out of doors in cold storms.

Above the scaffold beams there was a tight floor, excepting that it had trap-doors, by which you could go up into the loft above from either end of the alleyway or from the cow stables. This was intended principally as a loft for straw and corn-fodder, but could be used for hay if necessary, and it could be filled easily through doors which opened under the eaves of the barn, at four different places upon north and south sides. There was also a passage way from the left of the hay barn into the loft of this barn above the alleyways, by which hay could be brought to horses or cows before it was cut, or fodder carried the other way to be cut, if necessary.

Doors at the east end opened from the two cow stables and from the central alleyway into the barn-yard. In the loft above, upon the beams, which we used to call the great

beams of the barn, the large beams on a level with the eaves, was built a tank for water. This was fourteen feet long, ten feet wide, and two and a half feet deep. This was filled by a pipe from the ram in the brook, and when full would hold over twenty-six hundred gallons, which Clarence said ought to last for use a tbarns and house at least two weeks if the ram should not work at all.

From this, water could be drawn into a trough just back of the house, which was large enough to hold at least one drink for all the animals at the barn. It was in this trough the water was heated by the steam-pipe, and then it could be let off into the troughs which run under the cow mangers. The building and filling this tank in the barn loft made it much better for us about drawing water from the pipes in the house, for before we could not get it at the house if any other pipe was open that discharged at a lower point, but after the tank was full it would run from all the pipes at once, if necessary, or from one of them with great force. As this tank was lined with zinc it was quite expensive, and the lining it and connecting all the pipes made it necessary to have a plumber there for a few days, but Clarence would have it as he wanted it or not at all.

Passing out of the east end of the cattle barn, you entered into a low shed, which was open to the south; this was forty feet long and twenty feet wide, the north side being parallel with the north side of the cattle barn. Then another shed run south, one hundred feet long and twenty wide. The fifty feet nearest the open, or north shed, was intended for hogs. There was a passage way, four feet wide, along the east side, from which you could feed the hogs; then the feeding-room, six feet wide. This had a raised floor, made from the old floor planks of the old barn, and here was their bed of straw, and around it was the railing to keep the sows from lying down upon their pigs.

Then came the yard, nine feet wide. This shed was di-

vided into eight pens, and into the yards the manure of the cattle was carried twice a day, or oftener in winter, upon a low truck which Clarence had bought for that purpose. This was some labor, but he said he could not have a barn cellar suitable to keep manure in, owing to the level character of the land, nor did he want his barn so far from the house as would be necessary to get a place for a barn with a cellar; and he thought it would be better to have it under the shed and have the hogs work it over. Plenty of earth and river-mud was put in the bottom of these yards, and a supply was always kept in the open shed and put into the hog yards frequently. As each yard had its gate, through which the truck could be drawn, it was not a great deal of work after all to put in the manure and earth, while a convenient arrangement of the fence allowed every other partition to be taken out very quickly, to put two yards into one for backing in with a cart, or for turning two yards of hogs together.

The other fifty feet of shed was for sheep. This was closed on the east side, and partially closed upon the west by a board-fence about three feet high, just under the roof. Excepting at the entrances there was a rack around it for hay, which could be taken from the loft of either barn and placed upon the hay-truck, and carried through the passage way under the shed in front of the hogs directly to the sheep-shed without going out of doors.

At the north end, next to the hogs, was a space six feet by sixteen, which was divided into pens for sheep that it was desired to separate from the rest, or for letting young lambs into when it was desired to give them extra feed to fit them for the butcher. These sheds were built as cheaply as possible, the posts being burnt at the bottom and set in the ground. In setting them some pains was taken to put them with the top end of the stick in the ground and butt up. This was done at Jake's suggestion. He said they would not soak up water that way, and therefore would not rot so

quickly. The sides and roofs were rough boards, with the cracks covered with other narrow boards or battens. Indeed, it was time to begin to go cheaply, for he had again outrun his estimate of the cost of the undertaking; but it suited him when it was finished, and as money began to come in for pigs, chickens, lambs, butter, and fruit from the strawberry garden, besides the income from the boarders, he did not borrow trouble about paying his bills before fall.

Early in June he and mother had had a long talk about the work which was being done, and that which he intended to do, and it resulted in her giving to the squire another mortgage upon the farm; this came to the amount of a thousand dollars, with which money Clarence paid the most pressing bills which he had contracted, and then purchased another horse, which was made necessary by the increased age of old Charley and his slowness on the road, for there was considerable driving to be done to get the strawberries to market and to carry away the butter, which was packed in pound lumps, in boxes made to hold twenty-five pounds each, which boxes were again packed in larger boxes, with ice around them. I had forgotten to mention that the ice-house had been well filled in the winter, as Clarence bought ice of a man who cut it on the mill-pond. It was cheaper for Clarence to get it of him at a dollar a load, when he was cutting for himself, than to hire help and cut it.

We now found the ice a necessity about the butter, and a luxury for table use, and soon wondered how we could have lived so long without it. This was the feeling, indeed, in regard to most of the improvements which Clarence had made, and, for this reason, I think mother was almost as pleased to put this mortgage upon the farm as she had been before to have the other paid; and the knowledge that it had been possible to pay the one had deprived the other of its terrors; and the fact that we were making a large amount of butter and getting forty cents a pound for it, instead of

twenty-five, was a proof of ability to pay debts, which she could appreciate. She said the extra fifteen cents a pound would half pay the mortgage this year.

The purchase of another horse decided Clarence upon another extravagance which he had intended to put off until another season, but now he would not wait. So, before haying began, a new mowing-machine and a horse-rake were ordered from the city, and at the last of June, the building having been at last completed, the haying was begun, and it was finished before some of our neighbors had begun to do theirs. And there was a large lot of the hay, all said, though it did not fill the hay barn. Uncle Thomas said he calculated there was not less than thirty tons on the drained field, six on the two-acre field, nearly three below the garden, and about twelve on the eight-acre field, which was the poorest field we had.

Over fifty tons of hay and a good prospect of twenty more for a second crop, besides fodder on the six acres of sowed corn, and three of field-corn. Then there were about three or four tons of hay on the fresh bog. Clarence did not like going into the bog to cut that poor grass very well after having such an easy time getting the good hay on the uplands, and he declared that he never meant to cut grass there again. But when haying was finished, all hands were needed to attack the weeds, and for a week or two they were kept very busy at that work and the thinning the turnips. But Ned had done very well at the managing of the farm, and Clarence was only resting for a fresh start.

CHAPTER XXI.

During all this time our boarders had been with us, and we had found our new comers very pleasant. The Misses Dunbar were very quiet but sociable old ladies, spending their time in reading, fine needle-work, taking care of their birds (they had brought each a cage of canaries), and talking to them and one another. Mr. Harris bustled about, watching the farm work and the building most of the time, and talking with, or rather at, any one who would listen, of the way in which farms were managed when he was young, and the various improvements in methods that had been adopted.

As he was well informed upon the subject, having read a great deal upon it, and travelled considerably, Clarence was able to be very much interested in his conversation, which just suited Mr. Harris, who could excuse almost any breach of good manners better than an inattentive listener. He, however, did not like to have any one stop work to listen, and would either rebuke them for doing so, or would leave them, saying that he had no right to hinder them from work. He said "he had no patience with a man who could not think or talk without stopping work, as if there was not steam enough in him to move brain and hands at the same time."

For this reason he rather avoided Uncle Thomas, but Jake, Bill Giles, and the boys he would talk to (his wife said he lectured to them) by the hour, contented if they showed interest enough to make proper response. Nor were his talks confined to farming, for he was one of those men who had gathered up all sorts of information that came in his way.

His wife was a fitting match for him, being about as bustling, about as chatty, and quite as positive in the expression of her opinions. It was her pleasure to superintend mother

and I at our work in the milk-room, and she always was present at the churning and working of the butter. Even Nettie was somewhat in awe of her quiet remarks, although they had nothing of the bitterness which had marked the speeches of her mother when she was there. Nettie was very much the same as last year, though perhaps a little quieter.

She and Clarence were good friends, but I could see that it was on his part politeness toward one who lived in the same family with him, and that he did not feel the pleasure in her society which he had felt the previous summer. She often rode with him, and so might any other lady in the house, and welcome. She felt the difference in his manner, and she tried to regain her old power over him, but it was of no use. If she chose to be agreeable he received it pleasantly, but with an evident indifference. If she chose to be sulky and turn the cold shoulder to him he did not notice it.

The others were as they had been before. Jessie and the baby had grown very much, and were constant companions in the house or out of doors. Mr. Benson and Mr. Rockwood came to spend the Sabbath every week, and were great friends with Mr. Harris. They supplied him with the gossip and business news of the city, and he kept them posted in regard to the doings on the farm. One Saturday evening, as we all sat upon the piazza, we were joined by Jake, and the conversation soon turned upon the improvements which had been made upon the farm.

"Tell you, cappen," said Jake, "this don't look like the place I brought you and the boys to, almost two years ago, does it now? These chaps have changed the looks of things a sight since that time, and are making the old place shine, aint they?"

"They certainly have worked wonders," said Mr. Benson.

"It scarcely seems possible that the farm could have paid all the expenses of the improvements," said Mr. Rockwood.

"It is not so very wonderful," said Mr. Harris, "when

you think of it all. I have been talking with them about it, and as they had the farm and stock and tools to start with, which was a capital of four or five thousand dollars, and have given their time and attention to it for two years and more, have worked busily, two of them, besides the help they had from the ladies in the house, and have stuck closely in their business, and put their brains into it, it is not very strange if they have added to its value, and, perhaps, doubled the value of the capital they started with."

"That's it, sir;" said Jake, "they have put brains into the business, exactly, and that is what farmers round hereby mostly don't put into farming. Makes me mad when I think of it sometimes. They would think Jake was a fool if I tried to shoot with only a half charge of powder, because I couldn't afford to put in a full charge, but they try to get a crop without more than half a charge of manure, and then find fault with the land or the weather because it don't grow. Then they think it don't make no odds whether the powder or the shot goes first; do their work hind end foremost, and hunt the ground for what the good Lord never meant should be there. I know when I go out which place is most likely for partridges and which for rabbits, and I load just according to what I expect to shoot, but they don't know which lot is best for corn and which for taters, and load just as it happens. Then they think a poor cow is worth half as much as a good one, when the poor one don't pay her keeping and would be dear as a gift, and the good pays one a good profit over her keeping."

"What part of your farming pays best?" asked Mr. Harris of Clarence, — "the cows, the pigs, the hens, the garden stuff, the berries, or which?"

"I cannot tell," he answered, "for I have never tried to keep an account with them separately, but I think there is a profit in each, and each helps the other. I think my most profitable farm crops are my sowed corn and the rye sowed

in the pasture, if I reckon them by the value of the hay it would take to replace them, or the milk we got from the cows while they are eating them, in proportion to the cost of producing them. They help feed the cows, the cows help feed the pigs, and both help raise the garden stuff and berries. Each is necessary to the other."

"How about the hens, then?" persisted Mr. Harris.

"I am confident that they pay a good profit," he answered, "and I have thought it possible that a farm might be stocked with poultry alone and raise only eggs and chickens, and make a good living in that way for any one who was not able to do heavy work, but had the patience to give them the attention they would need. But in order to do it, I think a man would need to like the business, and must love the fowl well enough to know every hen by sight as well as I know my cows apart. You know several of them look alike to you, but I can tell them apart as far as I can see them. Just so a man ought to know his hens, if he has got to watch them and see if any are sick or are not laying eggs, or don't pay for keeping. A man will not notice such things as that if he can't tell his hens apart, and I reckon that there is as much difference in hens about paying their keeping as there is about cows."

"Will this year finish up your improvements upon the farm, Clarence?" asked Mr Benson.

"Not by a great deal, sir," he said; "I can see much more than I expect to be able to do for several years; but I shall try to finish the work I have begun, and one other that I see before me."

"What is that?" he asked.

"I mean to put that bog meadow or a part of it into cranberries this fall, if I can. It will be quite an expensive undertaking, but once done it will pay a large profit, I hope. I have been reading a great deal about it lately."

"I expect cranberries does pay amazingly," said Jake, "after you get them growing good, but I haven't an idea

of what must be done to get ready to raise them. But I still stick to it that it's wonderful how you have got ahead and fixed up the old place, and I don't believe many boys would have done it."

"It may be wonderful that they have taken such a course," said Mr. Harris; "but the greatest wonder to me is that more farmers do not do as well who have as much to start with as they had; but they are afraid to put their money back on the land where they take it from. If they get a dollar off the farm they put it somewhere else, and then by and by the farm does not pay and they have to use it up again. Men in business try to enlarge their business facilities, looking for larger profits either from cheaper management or increased trade; but farmers do not avail themselves of the facilities they have, and keep capital idle or worse than idle in unproductive land and unprofitable animals."

This conversation took place in July. In August it was very dry, and Clarence was obliged to hire pasture of Uncle Thomas for the sheep and calves, of which he had raised eight more this year. Then, he bought two yoke of oxen, and borrowed carts, and having shut off the pipe which led from the ram to the tank in the barn, he cautioned us not to use water wastefully, for he was intending to open a hole in his miniature dam for the purpose of drying off the bog meadow as much as possible before beginning his task of converting it into cranberry meadow.

Then, a gang of men were put at work under Mike's superintendence at taking off the turf of the meadow, while the horse teams and the three ox teams were put to drawing sand upon ground which was then left bare. Before they had filled it far out it was necessary to build a track or bridge of plank for the teams to drive over, but the work still went on. There were ten men at work upon the meadow and four in the sand bank, besides Clarence, Ned, and Mike, the two former being drivers of the teams.

The turf when taken off was piled up upon the sand with the under side uppermost to dry, and after a few days the teams were loaded to draw out the turf after the load of sand was tipped out; it took nearly three weeks to finish the whole meadow although all hands worked lively. When the sand was all applied, several barrels containing vines which had been previously ordered from a cranberry grower upon Cape Cod were taken down there and all hands were put at work setting the vines. This was done by punching holes, about a foot apart, in rows, the rows being about the same distance, or a little further apart, and into these holes little bunches of vines were jammed down with the stick and the sand pressed over them with the foot, just leaving a few inches of the vines in sight.

When it was all set the dam was built a little higher than before and a waste gate put in it so that it was possible to cover the meadow with two feet of water, or to draw the water off so as to leave it dry, if necessary. After this was finished the second crop of grass was cut. The pasture, or such of it as had not been ploughed and sown in rye during the previous years, was now ploughed and the rye was sown with grass-seed, thus providing ample pasture for the next year, and then the harvesting was begun.

As soon as the potatoes were dug in the orchard, the ground was manured and ploughed, and the whole of it was set in strawberry plants, which were taken in abundance from the old garden. All this made a fine strawberry garden. Then corn, turnips, and other vegetables were harvested, and by Thanksgiving time, our boarders having flown back to their city homes, after engaging their places for another year, we were prepared again for our annual statement of our financial affairs.

Before this time, however, the three yoke of oxen and two of our oldest cows had been fattened and disposed of, the two yokes that Clarence bought for the work upon the bog having

sold for more than they cost; Clarence said for more than first cost and cost of all they ate, so that he had their work for nothing and a profit added, a new and lighter yoke of oxen being bought. He thus tried to make the growth and gain of flesh pay the keeping and get the work and manure as clear profit. But you are waiting for that annual statement, which I am now ready to present: —

Cash on hand last Thanksgiving	$781 82	
Received for exchange of oxen	40 00	
Pork sold	36 50	
Lambs and fat sheep	182 00	
Wool	72 40	
Chickens and old fowl	785 80	
Eggs	362 15	
Pigs	415 50	
Strawberries and other small fruit	364 30	
Garden vegetables	81 10	
Cabbages	207 25	
Turnips	312 70	
Potatoes	123 50	
Butter	1,154 00	
Beef sold from two cows	42 50	
Pork sold	27 80	
Difference between oxen bought and sold	88 50	
26 weeks' board at $69	1,794 00	
		$6,871 82

Expended for wood-house, milk-room, ice-house, steam and milk apparatus	$681 80	
Ice	15 00	
3 cows	160 00	
40 sheep	200 00	
Orchard, besides labor of those on the place	387 50	
Phosphate and ashes in spring	185 00	
Barn and sheds	715 80	
Repairs of house	368 15	
Horse	150 00	
Tools, harnesses, strawberry boxes, etc.	318 20	
Amount carried forward,	$3,181 45	

Amount brought forward,	$3,181 45	
Mike's labor	454 50	
Uncle Thomas' labor	256 25	
Other labor not included in other accounts	61 65	
Labor and vines on cranberry meadow	328 75	
Grain, scraps, etc.	663 30	
Blacksmith's bill	47 20	
Taxes	72 85	
Groceries	835 10	
Meat, fish, etc.	342 60	
Other expenses	84 20	
Interest on mortgage, 4 months	20 00	
Insurance on buildings, stock, tools, and furniture	36 50	
		$6,384 35
Amount of money on hand		487 47
		$6,871 82

In addition to this the improvement in land, including drained fields, feed in pastures, strawberry beds, orchard and cranberry meadow, is not less than	$800 00
Improvement of house and porch, milk-room and ice-house, about	800 00
Improvement of barns and sheds	1,400 00
Improvement of hen-house	150 00
12 cows, 8 heifers, 8 calves, instead of 4 cows	700 00
Hay, fodder, and manure more than 3 years ago	800 00
10 breeding sows	150 00
Poultry — 160 hens, instead of 40	90 00
65 sheep	260 00
One horse	150 00
Harnesses, tools, strawberry boxes, etc.	300 00
Making the whole value above what it was when father died	$5,600 00
Adding mortgage paid	500 00
Adding cash on hand more than then, about	400 00
Profit of three seasons' work	$6,500 00

When Clarence had read this no one spoke for a few moments, but at last Ned said, nervously,—

"Do you think we could have done better if you had taken Uncle Robert's advice and gone to Blackington?"

"I think we would not have done as well, my son, but I can scarcely realize that we have done as well as this."

"But it is none the less true, mother," said Clarence; "and even this does not tell the whole story, for now the farm is in condition to pay a profit for years to come without the expenditure of much money for permanent improvements; but I intend as fast as possible to improve the pasture and add it to the mowing, until I can keep my cows in the barn all the time. Next year I expect good crops of strawberries and other small fruit in the orchard, and in three years or so, I ought to have peaches and plums there, and a few pears and cherries, it may be, and by the same time I ought to get a crop of cranberries. That will count up, if I can get a thousand or twelve hundred bushels of berries there at three dollars a bushel or more; three hundred bushels is not an extraordinary yield, and if others can get it, I can. And next year we shall have twenty cows, young and old, and I think I can get even a better price for butter than I have this year."

When we began to manage the farm the question was, "Could we save the old farm" and get our living on it? I think we have saved it and made a new farm of it.

CHAPTER XXII.

CONCLUSION.

And now, kind reader, my simple tale is told. I know it is lacking in startling incident and hair-breadth escapes, but thus often runs the life of many people for longer periods of time than my story embraces. There is no intricate plot,

and it may be you will fail to find a moral, while love, religion, and politics, which fill the pages of so many tales of the day, have but a small place in this. I tell it as it was told to me, by one whose part in its actions was more prominent than I have been allowed to exhibit, or than her story has revealed, for my story in its main incidents is true. If you fail to find the localities named here upon the map of New England, it is not because they are not there, but because the names are not spelled as I have spelled them. If you have not known the kind squire and his wife, and honest Jake Wood, and Uncle Tom Hardy, and Bill Giles, and the other people I have introduced to you, the loss is yours. Should you desire to know any of them better, it is possible that I may show another page in their lives at some future day, and although some of them have passed on to a higher and brighter life, others yet live, and have passed through more eventful scenes.

And now, kind reader, let me urge you to take some Old Farm and make of it a New Farm.

In so doing you will do yourself and the community you live in a real service.

THE END.

Mrs. A. D. T. Whitney's Books.

LORING, Publisher, Boston.

Mrs. Whitney's Books to-day command the largest number of readers.

Each one is full of beautiful, suggestive thoughts that cling to the memory.

Again and again they are taken up, and with each reading new beauties are developed.

This is the secret of their enduring popularity.

Faith Gartney's Girlhood.

Handsome Cloth. Price, $1.75.

This charming story fills a void long felt for something for a young girl growing into womanhood to read.

It depicts that bewitching period in life lying between *fourteen* and *twenty*, with its noble aspirations and fresh enthusiasm.

A lady of great culture says of it, — "'Faith Gartney's Girlhood' is a noble, good work."

From the first page to the last, the impression is received of a life which has been lived; the characters are generous, well drawn, skilfully presented.

They are received at once with kind, friendly greeting, and are followed with interest till the last page compels a reluctant farewell.

The book is written for girls, growing as they grow to womanhood.

Suggestive, pleasing thoughts are unfolded on every page.

In these days, when the tendency of society is to educate girls for heartless, aimless, factitious life, a book like this is to be welcomed and gratefully received.

Wherever it is read, it will be retained as a thoughtful, suggestive— if silent friend.

SOLD BY ALL BOOKSELLERS. MAILED FOR THE ADVERTISED PRICE.

The Gayworthys.

Handsome Cloth. Price, $2.00.

Read what the English papers say of it: —

"We wish to write our most appreciative word of this admirable and unexceptional book. We feel while we read it that a new master of fiction has arisen."— *London Eclectic Journal.*

"It is impossible not to welcome so genial a gift. Nothing so complete and delicately beautiful has come to England from America since Hawthorne's death. . . . We know not where so much tender feeling and wholesome thought are to be found together as in this history of the fortunes of the Gayworthys."— *London Reader.*

"'The Gayworthys' belongs to a class of novels wanted more and more every day, yet daily growing scarcer."— *London Pall Mall Gazette.*

"We have no misgivings in promising our readers a rich treat in 'The Gayworthys.' . . . 'The Gayworthys' will become a great favorite." — *London Nonconformist.*

". . . The book is crowded with epigrams as incisive as this, yet incisive without malice or bitterness, cutting not so much from the sharpness of the thought as from its weight." — *London Spectator.*

"It is pleasant book, and will make for the producer friends." — *Saturday Review.*

"We venture to say no one who begins the books will leave it unfinished, or will deny that great additions have been made to his circle of acquaintance. He has been introduced to a New England village, and made acquainted with most of the leading villagers in a way which leaves the impression on him thenceforward that he knows them personally, and their fortunes and failures, and achievements, and misunderstandings are matters of interest to him; that he would like to know how Gershon Vose got on with his farm, and if Joanna Gair's marriage turned out happily, and if 'Say' Gair was as interesting as a farmer's wife as she has been as a little child."

The Boys at Chequasset;

Or, A Little Leaven.

Handsome Cloth. Price, $1.00.

A delightful story of a little lad who impulsively started all sorts of projects and never finished them, thereby causing all sorts of annoyance to others.

Joining a little party of lads who were making a collection of birds' eggs, order and system was forced upon him, — and this was the "Leaven" which wrought a complete change in him.

All ages enjoy this practical story.

Patience Strong's Outings.

Handsome Cloth. Price, $1.50.

"Is a peculiar and a rare book. The beautiful sympathy and intuition which shone in her former publications do not fail her in this. The ideas are of a deep significance, and are originally expressed. We do not remember any work similar to it in style. There is an incoherence, a disjointedness of phrase, which expresses far more than smoothness could. She writes as we talk when deep feeling moves us (reservedly, with averted face, as it were, treading with hesitation on such holy ground), groping for expression which shall be forceful, yet as far as possible removed from sentimentality or cant. She goes at once to the heart of life's deepest experiences, and, with a simplicity beautiful as it is rare, one's heart is moved with the nobles impulses, and softened by the tender pathos of her thoughts. We need not recommend such a book. The author's name is recommendation enough."— *N. Y. Christian Enquirer.*

Hitherto;

A Story of Yesterdays.

Handsome Cloth. Price, $2.00.

Read what the English papers say of it: —

"To all who can appreciate a book of high purpose, of real power of high interest — it will prove a most inviting and useful companion." *London Nonconformist.*

"Never could Idyll boast a nobler rustic lover than Richard Hathaway; and never has a scene of rustic love been described with more simple grace and quiet humor than the episode of Annie's disgrace and the 'worrying' of her hideous bonnet"— *Illustrated London News.*

"Our readers may order this book from the library without fear. There are touches of nature and family scenes which will find a ready response in the female heart; and there is nothing that can offend the most fastidious critic." — *London Athenæum.*

"Especially is the character of Richard Hathaway an exquisite conception — excellent in its weakness and strength, excellent in its shy self-depreciation, and yet in its occasional glimpses of its own real worth and deservingness. We cannot think ourselves wrong in rating it as one of the most faithfully-drawn characters in modern fiction." — *London Literary Churchman.*

Mother Goose for Grown Folks.

Six Characteristic Illustrations. By "Augustus Hoppin."

Handsome Cloth. Price, $1.50.

"The grown-up children, who have learned how much wit and wisdom are embodied in these amplifications of nursery texts, will be glad to see this new edition, enriched as it is by some of HOPPIN'S cleverest pencillings. To those who have not read the book we commend it as one of Mrs. Whitney's most happy conceptions." — *Buffalo Express.*

"She puts character, art and soul into whatever she does, and few can read her books without being stirred to clearer thought, kindlier feeling, and better purposes." — *Morning Star.*

"There are some who may think that when Dr. Johnson once declared he could write the history of a broomstick, he said rather a daring thing. It is a pretty hard thing, no doubt, to write the history of a broomstick; but to write philosophical poetry upon nursery rhymes seems to us a much more difficult piece of work. We do not positively know whether Dr. Johnson could have written the history of a broomstick, but we are certain that Mrs. Whitney can write capital poetry, and philosophical poetry, too, upon the nursery rhymes of a certain ancient dame, yclept Mother Goose." — *Star in the West.*

Zerub Throop's Experiment.

Handsome Cloth. Price, 75 Cents.

This story is written in the author's quaintest vain, and pictures New England life with her usual felicity. It abounds with her unique and delighted ideas, one of which — Caroline's way of teaching Astronomy — is at once tersely and charmingly set forth. It is more than graceful, it is pathetic. Also, the scene between Dimmy and the Doctor is inimitable. Nothing could be more graphically drawn, and the Doctor's mode for treatment at least affords food for thought. New England gossip is also hit off with racy strokes. The ghostly way in which the story turns is capital both in conception and writing, and is particularly suggestive to those disposed to discuss special Providences.

The "Experiment seems to have been eminently successful. The only fault we can find with it is, that it is too short, and just tantalikes us with a taste of "richness."

HOW

We Saved the Old Farm,

AND

HOW IT BECAME A NEW FARM.

BY

"A YOUNG FARMER."

LORING, Publisher,

Corner Bromfield and Washington streets,

BOSTON.

Price, 50 Cents.

HOW I MANAGED MY HOUSE ON £200 A YEAR.

By MRS. WARREN. Neat Paper Covers. Price, 38 Cts.

This fascinating story of married life in England, has had an unparalleled success,

Thirty-six Thousand Copies

having been sold the first year of its publication.

This great problem, how to make "a limited income" procure the most comforts, is one that almost every young married lady has to meet.

Mrs. Warren in a simple, familiar story, which carries you captive from the opening to the close, tells you how she labored to do it and failed in the beginning; how she started anew, determined to conquer; what hints others gave her; what homely rules she practised, until she "mastered the situation," and created a happy home for a loving husband and increasing family.

COMFORT FOR SMALL INCOMES.

By MRS. WARREN. Neat Paper Covers. Price, 38 Cts.

Mrs. Warren enlarges in this story on the same theme as her first book, treating more fully on the importance of attending to trifles.

"There is nothing in this earth so small that it may not produce great things."

In most homes there is a tendency to leave small matters to take care of themselves.

How such a mistake could have arisen,—that it is beneath a woman's dignity to superintend the cookery of her kitchen,—it is hard to tell. Woman should be an adept in all domestic work, should know how to prepare any meal required, should know when everything brought home has been made the best use of, then she is independent of the sudden desertion of her servants, or can direct them with such clearness that no imposition is attempted, and ***she*** and ***not they*** is at the head of the house.

This delightful story teaches this lesson, and like its predecessor is full of suggestions that every quick-witted and ambitious young matron quickly seizes and adapts to her special needs.

HOW I MANAGED MY CHILDREN FROM INFANCY TO MARRIAGE.

By MRS. WARREN. Neat Paper Covers. Price, 38 Cts.

Matrimony, to a young girl, often presents the fairest prospect of earthly happiness.

Marriage, she fancies, emancipates her from all wearisome home duties.

A few months of wedded life dispels these illusions, and shows the responsibility she has assumed must be met, no evasion can be practised, if she would make her new home attractive to her husband, and the "heaven on earth," read about and dreamed of in her girlhood's days.

In this little manual, ***a true mother*** tells us how she successfully reared up ***eight children,*** carrying them through the perils of Infancy and Childhood, directing and developing their physical and mental natures, and prepared them for useful and creditable positions in life.

HOW TO CHOOSE A HOUSE AND FURNISH IT WITH LIMITED MEANS.

By MRS. WARREN. Neat Paper Covers. Price, 38 Cts.

The experience of a city Clerk, his young Bride, and a practical common sense Mother.

It is full of suggestive hints that will help any one furnishing a house.

MY LADY-HELP,

And What She Taught Me.

By MRS. WARREN. Neat Paper Covers. Price, 50 Cts.

"Lady-Helps; or Domestic Service for Gentlewomen," was started in London some four years ago, by Mrs. Rose M. Crawshay, lady of Cyfarthfa Castle, wife of one of the wealthiest iron-masters in England, a lady of extensive influence, and marked benevolence.

She asked for her Lady-Helps privileges becoming to the station they were reared in, and guaranteed in return—more truthfulness—better service than they were getting. Her plan was tried—her scheme flourished—and now the demand exceeds the supply.

It did other good. It familiarized the notion, that *that there is no loss of dignity*, but rather the reverse, in domestic service.

Mrs. Warren takes the matter up, and tells the story of a married couple tried by incompetent help, constantly changing, till the wife, in desperation, engaged a lady-help.

Four years she stayed with them, and "What she taught me," this practical, common-sense story tells delightfully.

Every American lady will read it with profit.

MY TEN-ROD FARM.

How Mrs. Maria Gilman became a Florist.

By CHARLES BARNARD. Neat Paper Covers. Price, 38 Cts.

Mrs. Maria Gilman was left a widow with two children—no money—"a Ten-Rod Farm," that was mortgaged. How to retain her home, was a problem she could not solve.

A wealthy neighbor gave a large dinner party. A city florist was to furnish the floral decorations, and at the last moment he disappointed them.

An appeal was made to Mrs. Gilman to furnish the supply from her garden, and the money the city florist was to have, was given to her.

This suggested to her to take into town from week to week what she could cut, and sell to the city flower shops. Her choice of stock met with a ready sale.

Step by step she felt her way along, helped by those who admired to see her helping herself. **A Greenhouse was Built and Stocked.**

The detail of her operations, both raising and selling, is given in full.

$2,000 A YEAR INCOME,

—a home free from debt—was the result at the end of five years.

FARMING BY INCHES.

Mr. & Mrs. Nelson's Successful Experiment.

By CHARLES BARNARD. Neat Paper Covers. Price, 38 Cts.

Mr. Nelson, a city Bookkeeper, by over work broke down. His physician ordered him into the country, to work out in the open air, as the only means of cure.

With his wife, they took a little Farm of Three Acres, and turned their attention to vegetable raising for the market.

The storekeepers had to supply "Garden Sass" to their patrons, getting it from the city, as their farmers would not bother to raise it.

How he experimented till he realized a ***net*** income of ***Ten per cent*** on his investment, and fully regained his health, is told by Mr. Barnard in a most practical and entertaining manner.

THE STRAWBERRY GARDEN.

John and Kate Wellson's Success.

How It was Planted — What It Cost — What Came of It.

By CHARLES BARNARD. Neat Paper Covers. Price, 38 Cts.

Mr. Wellson finds himself running in debt. It is Strawberry season, and their garden produced a handsome supply; John and Kate determined to pick and sell a part of the crop.

They are successful. Consulting an experienced Strawberry-raiser, by his advice and aid they start a large bed for the coming year.

The second year they sold Strawberries and Grapes, which, after paying all expenses, left them a net result of $554.60.

How this was done, is told in the most practical manner.

FIVE THOUSAND A YEAR,

And How I Made It in One Year's Time,

Starting Without Capital.

By EDWARD MITCHELL. Neat Paper Covers. Price, 38 Cts.

Reverses of fortune threw a young man upon his own resources. A newspaper article on "*Small Farming*," and the profit there was in it, arrested his attention, and upon investigating the matter, he determined to try it.

Books treating upon it were read, and in April a year's lease was taken of a half-acre of ground on Long Island, at one hundred dollars.

Lettuce, Radishes, Tomatoes, Cabbages, Turnips,

alternated, and their sales amounted to $531.75.

The last of September a cheap Greenhouse was built, and the sales amounted to $401.98.

The third year a five-acre farm was bought in Connecticut, accessible to the city by boat and rail.

A NEW GREENHOUSE WAS BUILT.

Onions and Verbenas proved the most profitable. The fifth year's result you have.

The detailed work of each year is fully given, with the results that came from it.