

ground already planted with bearing canes, and nothing more was needed than to transform it from a field of wild blackberries into a cultivated one.

He was satisfied that he knew how to make the change. He was sure there would be all the fruit he wanted, and that cultivation would cause the berries to grow larger and look nicer, and therefore to bring a higher price. Besides, he had quietly consulted the market-men at Trenton about what he intended to do, for he was a little in doubt as to their being willing to buy the immense quantity of berries he expected to have another year. He was somewhat uncertain as to there being mouths enough to consume this crop. But they all smiled at the idea of his being able to raise more than they could sell, and told him to go ahead, as they would take twice as large a crop as he could turn in. It seems that one was concerned in a great canning establishment, where thousands of quarts were preserved in glass jars for distribution over the country, and he was assured that this concern alone could take all he might be able to produce.

This fear of glutting the fruit market is a very common one with people who know nothing of the business; but it never troubles those who have been a lifetime engaged in it. Where to find a market occasions them no distress. Their only concern is how to produce the fruit, as it may be said to be all sold even before it is grown; that is, when one is located near a great market. Uncle Benny's doubts being thus dispelled, he went to work immediately by hiring two men for the job, who began as soon as the leaves had fallen.

As before said, this immense brier patch covered six acres of ground, about twice as long as it was wide. He directed the men to make openings ten feet wide clear across the width, leaving a narrow row of canes. They went in with sharp brier scythes, and rapidly cut down everything before them; though it was tearing, scratching work for hands and clothes, as many years' growth of dead and hard wood had to come away. Then the trimmings were piled on a cart, and brought out, and thrown into an immense heap, where they were burned. Then all the dead wood was cut out from the rows thus left standing, and the new canes were shortened wherever they had grown too high. This trash was also carted away and burned. When this thorough cleaning up and trimming had been completed, every row looked as nice and as snug as any of the great fields of the improved kinds of blackberries which are now so common. Where vacant places occurred in the rows, they were filled by setting new roots. The spaces between the rows were then gone over with a double plough, which tore up thousands of old roots, and this being several times followed by a two-horse harrow, it

loosened and released a multitude of others,—so many, indeed, as to require a mass to be raked up and carted away.

But when these several operations had been as carefully carried out as Uncle Benny required them to be, the whole field looked more like a garden than any spot on the farm. It was really beautiful to see how perfectly straight the rows of canes stretched across the field, and how mellow was the soil between them, not a root or weed being visible. It was with immense satisfaction that the old man viewed the complete realization of his plans. It took some weeks to carry out this regenerating process, besides costing considerable of money,—all which he cheerfully advanced, on the credit of next crop.

But he declared that the satisfaction he enjoyed in seeing a wilderness converted into a fruit field was compensation enough. It was a greater pleasure for him to spend money in improvements of this description than it could possibly be to others to hoard it.

Spangler had seen the operation going on, but said little, except dropping a remark occasionally about how much money it was costing. Improvement was altogether out of his line. But one day when Uncle Benny happened to be contemplating, by himself, this triumph of his ideas, he was suddenly accosted with:

"Well, well, what a spot of work this is!"

Looking round, he discovered their neighbor, Mr. Allen, who, until that moment, had seen nothing of Uncle Benny's operations in the brier-patch. He seemed confounded with the spectacle before him.

"Why, Uncle Benny, you beat me all to pieces! This is the completest piece of workmanship ever done in the country. I give you credit for your good judgment, as well as for your courage, and what is more, this thing is going to pay. It is a big job, I know; but the more of it the better for you."

Spangler came up while Mr. Allan was thus speaking, but made no remark, though Mr. Allen's emphatic indorsement of Uncle Benny's work had its effect upon his generally slow perceptions.

"What a mass of manure you have in the bottom of this brier-patch!" he continued. "I have known it thirty years, exactly as it was before you reclaimed it. Thirty or more crops of wood and leaves have fallen and decayed on this ground, perhaps fifty; and, now you have so thinned out the plants as to have only one to feed where there used to be fifty, you will need no manure for years to come."

But the fame of the undertaking spread over the neighborhood, it being an unheard-of thing among the owners of brier-patches. Many persons went to see it, and various opinions were expressed as to