

date. Then I visited the leading towns in Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island, seeking out in each town one retail grocer or fruit dealer who handled high-grade goods. To him I told my little story of soil and variety selection, tillage, pruning, fertilizing and fruit thinning. I told him how the fruit was being gathered fully ripe, day by day, as it came to maturity, carefully assorted in three sizes, rejecting all unsound or imperfect specimens, packing the fruit in new baskets made of the whitest wood obtainable, every basket to be rounding full of perfect fruit of the grade, and guaranteeing uniformity of packing; that I was jobbing the fruit myself; that prices would probably be twenty-five or fifty per cent. above the market rates, but that the fruit would be worth it; and that I was prepared to give an exclusive agency to the one dealer in each town who would push the goods into the best family trade.

When the crop began to come in, liberal advertising in the Hartford papers started sales at once. The few outside trial orders gave such satisfaction that orders came pouring in faster than there were peaches to supply them, so that after the first week of the season the daily orders were far in excess of the supply, and prices were advanced to "what the traffic would bear." It was all cash trade, too.

With a girl to book orders and look after the cash, one boy and I worked in the store every night from six to eleven, taking the fruit from the wagons as they came from the farm, and making up the out-of-town orders. And again at four a. m. we supplied the Hartford and local trade, after which came a drive of eight miles out to the farm, there to spend the day assisting at the harvest or toning up of the weak places in the plan of picking, assorting and packing. I soon found that men, however honest, would occasionally sneak the best peaches to the top of the baskets, and that women,

with quicker eye, defter fingers, and natural honesty, made the best graders and packers.

Long days, hard work and lots of fun there were in that first crop, but the greatest pleasure of all was the signing of what then seemed a big check for \$2,100 that paid off the mortgage on the farm, and gave the mortgagee a chance to re-lend the money on a Kansas farm 1,500 miles away, where they could not see the borrower daily if he should depart from the orthodox ways of the neighborhood to branch off into the heresy of a new agriculture.

The peach harvest rounded up nearly \$10,000 profit, from a farm that my neighbors thought three months before was not good security for a loan of \$2,000. All other debts were paid, and the entire surplus was promptly invested in fertilizers for the orchard. Winter's frost destroyed all hopes of a crop the next season, and money had to be borrowed to keep things going; but only for a little while, for 1889 gave a banner crop of superb fruit, which, marketed as before, gave net profits from thirty-five acres of over \$24,000. Such a fruit harvest was a novel sight in New England, and dealers, consumers and land owners from far and near flocked to the orchards by the hundreds each day. New England received a stimulus in peach growing, resulting in the planting of over 200,000 trees in the season of 1890. Continued planting since shows at the present time over 3,000,000 trees in the peach orchards of Connecticut, more than 100,000 in Rhode Island, 300,000 in Massachusetts, and not less than 50,000 in southern counties of New Hampshire.

My own planting has at least kept pace with the rest, so that now 50,000 trees in Connecticut alone represent the outgrowth of the "crazy" scheme of twenty-five years ago. Rocky hills and semi-abandoned brush pastures have been purchased; woods, rocks and stumps have been cleared away at an expense often exceeding five and even