old man addressed the boys: "This man is what is known as a tree-pedler. Now, Tony, if ever you get a farm of your own, take care how you buy anything from a tree-pedler. Things sold by these fellows are generally considered cheap because the price is low. But what is thus called a cheap tree or vine is the very dearest thing you can buy. You can't get a really valuable article without paying for it a fair price. Plants that are sold at an excessively low price should be avoided, as they invariably have some defect about them. They have either been badly grown, or been stunted, or have a poor supply of roots, or they are the refuse of a nursery which has been bought up by a pedler, to be worked off among the farmers. Especially you should never touch a plant, even as a gift, when the seller refuses to tell you where or by whom it was grown."

"But that was nice fruit that he showed in his book," interrupted Tony.

"O yes," replied Uncle Benny, "they looked very well on paper, like many other impositions. They sounded very cheap also,—peach-trees at three dollars a hundred, when the price is ussually ten or twelve. Now, suppose I were to set out a hundred of these trees, saving five or six dollars in the price, and, after cultivating them two or three years, should then discover that, instead of their producing the fine fruit that was promised, it was scarcely good enough for the pigs? There would be the loss of at least two years' time and labor, and all the money I had paid, besides the vexation which every one feels on discovering that he has been cheated. It would be even worse in the case of pear-trees, for there one has to wait longer for them to come into bearing. By saving ten cents in the purchase of a tree, he may find that, instead of the Bartlett he bargained for, he has been cheated into the purchase and cultivation of a choke-pear. It is the poorest sort of economy to buy cheap trees; and it is sometimes dangerous to get them, even at full prices, from persons in whose character you do not have full confidence. But there are others who think just as I do on the subject, as I will show you.

Taking from his pocket a number of "The Country Gentlemen," he read to them the following article:—

"No man can obtain anything valuable without paying its full price. If he makes a purchase of a fine horse for a small sum he will probably find that the horse has some hidden disease,—heaves, founder, spavin, ringbone,—or else that he has obtained the name of a cheating horse-dealer, which is still more undesirable. If he attempts to build a house at a lower contract price than the builder can afford it, he will ultimately discover that a good deal of bad material has been used, or that he has a long string of extras, which, by dexterous contrivance, have been thrust in. It is so in buying fruit-trees. If a purchaser finds a lot offered at low retail prices, he will probably discover them to have been badly cultivated, neglected, moss-covered, or to have been carelessly dug up, with chopped roots,—or to consist of some unsaleable varieties, or to have been poorly packed, or the roots left exposed till they have become dry and good for nothing.

"Now, suppose a purchase is made of one of these trees at five cents below the regular market price among the best nurserymen. The owner congratulates himself on having effected a saving of the sum of five cents. Let us see how much he is likely to lose. If the tree is stunted, it will be at least three years before it can attain the vigor of its thrifty compeer. In other words, he sells three years of growth, three years of attention, if it gets any, three years of occupancy of the ground, and three years of delayed expectations, for the sum of five cents. Or suppose the tree has been purchased below price because it is the last in a pedler's wagon, and has been dried or frozen. The owner pays for the tree, digs a hole, and sets it out; it will probably die,—in which case he loses what he has paid, the labor expended, and one year of lost time and expectation. He has gained nothing. If the tree lives, the former estimate will then apply. Or, again, suppose that he buys a tree, and saves five cents, as aforesaid, because the quality, or the sort, or the honesty of the dealer, as to the genuineness, may be questionable. After several years of waiting and labor, it turns out to be a poor sort, and the tree continues to bear this poor fruit for thirty years to come. The fruit, being unsaleable, will probably bring no more than ten cents a bushel. In thirty years the annual crop will be about three bushels, or ninety bushels in all, equal to nine dollars total value. But if, instead of this miserable specimen, the purchaser procures a tree at full price, and one of the most productive and marketable varieties, the crop will always sell in market at twenty-five, and sometimes fifty cents a bushel; and for the whole thirty years will average at least eight bushels annually,—sixty dollars for the thirty years, at the lowest computation. There is a loss of fifty-one dollars made by purchasing the cheap tree, all for the sake of saving five cents."

While the hoeing of this cornfield was going on, there was continual opportunity for observing the difference in growth of that end of the rows which received the drainage from the barn-yard. The plants were double the height of the others, and there was a deep, rank green that was nowhere else perceptible. Here too the weeds grew taller and stouter, as well as more abundantly. Uncle Benny had always taught the boys that the greatness of a farmer's crop was not to be measured by the number of his acres, but by the thoroughness with which he enriched his land and the care bestowed upon the crop. His theory was to put a large amount of labor on a small amount of land. The two-acre cornfield was an excellent illustration of his theories. The boys saw for themselves that in that portion which received the washing from the barnyard they would have a far greater crop than from the other portion, because of the full supply of manure which it received. Whenever he came to a remarkably fine hill of corn, the old man would tell them that the earth was really of no use except to afford a standing-place for plants while the farmer was feeding them, and that money laid out in manure must not be considered as money lost, because it always reproduced itself in the crop. He rarely gave chemical reasons, or used scientific terms, as the boys had no knowledge of them.

But he explained how it was that plants acquired their growth. The earth kept them in an upright