

Allens, declared they had never seen such silken-coated animals as these, all occasioned by clean keep and regular currying. Uncle Benny one day told the boys that, if Bill continued to push them forward at that rate, he didn't know but he should think of taking them to the country fair, and enter them as candidates for the premium.

But the pen in which the boys had begun this operation of pig-raising was now found to be too small. So, as they had considerable money laid by from the blackberries, Uncle Benny told them they must use a portion of it in putting up a new pen. It was partly for this purpose that he had urged them to save it. It is true that he had given way to their importunities so far as to buy something for each,—one wanted a cap, another a whip, and the third would have a parcel of books. He insisted on being the general cash-keeper, but required each one to have a regular account of how much he was entitled to, and how it was laid out. Thus, in addition to teaching them the importance of economy, he taught them the first lessons in book-keeping.

A quantity of boards being purchased, the boys quickly constructed a new and much larger pen. The old man had consented to their joining funds and buying a very complete set of tools; and, by help of these and his instructions, they succeeded in getting up as handsome a pen as any of the neighboring farmers could boast of, even before it had been well whitewashed. There was a covered sleeping-place provided, so that in wet weather the pigs could keep themselves dry; and a door, through which Bill could get in without climbing over the fence. Then the old hoghead was removed, the ugly patchwork fence taken down, and a thorough clearing up made of the ground. This resulted in a great collection of manure, which was added to a very respectable pile from the same prolific manufactory.

"Nothing like pigs!" exclaimed Uncle Benny to the boys, as he surveyed the huge compost heap. "They earn their living without knowing it. I must have some of this on our blackberries,—at least one row must be supplied with it, just to show you the difference between high culture and only half culture."

It turned out that Uncle Benny's remark about taking some of the pigs to the fair had some meaning in it, for he now made up his mind that he would do so. He looked over the printed list of premiums for different animals, and found that whoever should exhibit the four best pigs of a certain age should have a premium of three dollars. Now, the amount was very small, and really not worth the trouble and cost of taking four pigs some ten miles to the fair, even if one succeeded in securing it. But the old man explained to the boys that

there would be a great deal of honor gained by taking the premium. That was much more than the money. Besides, a premium animal always attracted great notice from those who attended, and it generally sold at a high price. Many persons went to such gatherings on purpose to buy fine animals; and, even if they failed of securing the premium, they still might get a good price for the pigs.

Well, as it had already been determined that the boys should go that fall to the fair, it was resolved to compete for the premium. So the four best pigs were put in a pen by themselves, and then began a course of high feeding that had never been practised on Spangler's farm. Uncle Benny bought from the Trenton butcher, about once a week, a barrelful of bones having considerable meat left on them, sheeps' heads and cows' heels, with now and then a pluck; and, in fact, whatever offal the butcher made. These he had boiled up into soup, with a sprinkling of corn-meal and mill-feed, and served it out warm, three times a day; giving just as much as the pigs wanted, but no more. It was amazing what an effect this meat-soup diet produced. The pigs grew so rapidly as to confound Farmer Spangler, who had always been a poor sort of provider. They became fairly round with fat; and, when the proper time arrived, they were put into a wagon and taken to the fair, where the committee placed them in a pen by themselves, with this label, written in large letters, directly in front:—

CHESTER-COUNTY WHITES.

FOUR PIGS FROM THE SAME LITTER,—FIVE MONTHS OLD.
RAISED BY JOSEPH AND WILLIAM SPANGLER, AND
ANTHONY KING.

When thus disposed of, Uncle Benny and the boys strolled leisurely around the enclosure to see what other folks had brought. They naturally looked into the pig department first, but could find nothing that came anywhere up to theirs, though a large number had been entered for the prize. Uncle Benny declared that he began to think there might be a chance for their getting it. Then they wandered all over the grounds, examining the multitude of animals, of implements, vegetables, fruits, and other useful and ornamental things that were on exhibition. Uncle Benny pointed out to them the useful novelties, as well as the improved agricultural implements and explained how they operated, and why they were better than those they had at home.

The older boys were deeply interested in all they saw; but Bill Spangler broke away every half-hour, to run off and see the pigs. Every time he came back he reported to Uncle Benny that there was a considerable crowd gathered round the pen, some of whom were inquiring where Mr. Spangler and Mr. King could be found. These repeated announce-