

THE FRUIT GROWER'S STORY

A man once determined a rural life
Was the happiest, best and more free from strife
Than a life in the city of noise and soot,
So he moved in the country and commenced raising
fruit.

He planted some peaches, some apples and cherries,
And between the tree rows some fancy strawberries.
He watched with great care the trees as they grew,
And pruned and sprayed as most orchardists do.

His money gave out, yet still he worked hard,
Well knowing that soon he would have his reward
In selling the fruit that the trees would unfold,
And bring him returns in silver and gold.

At last the crop comes, fruit plenteous and fine,
It's ready for market. Now comes the time
When new friends appear: clever fruit men galore
Who give much advice, but give nothing more.

He needs money for help and money for boxes—
His advisers are gone like so many foxes,
But he gets his fruit packed and ready for sale;
And ships, how? Well—on this letter so frail:

Mr. Rural Fruit Grower:—

My very dear sir:
A very great favor on us you'll confer,
If at once you advise us what fruit you can send;
We refer you to Bradstreets, and remain
Your dear friend.

He ships after getting the usual wire:
"Market good, ship quick, we think will go higher."
He stops not to think that this house wires all over,
And the market's a puzzle, like "pigs in the clover."

For many do exactly like our Rural Fruit Grower.
Result: market higher? not much; market lower.
A few days later the returns he receives,
Ninety dollars; deduct charges, one dollar it leaves.

SOLILOQUY.

"One dollar the first of my orchard's crop,
I'll let the rest of my peaches rot.
No! I can't do this, I'll continue the gamble,
Perhaps in the wind-up of the general shamble,
A dollar or two may happen to stray
Around to me, and help my box bills to pay."

The dream of the beautiful rural life
Of the gentle fruit grower, secluded from strife,
Is a pretty tale; but to us who know,
It's not a sweet dream, but a perfect side show.

—*American Fruit Growers' Magazine.*