

to reading about what others had done in the same line,—how they had prospered,—and thus a fund of knowledge would be acquired for him to draw upon whenever he set up for himself.

As before mentioned, Mr. Spangler made a strange departure from his rule of plenty of work for everybody, by quitting home on a wet day and going to the tavern rendezvous, to hear what the neighbors had to say, leaving no work marked out for his "hands" to do in his absence. These wet days were therefore holidays for the boys. All three were good readers; and so they usually borrowed a book from Uncle Benny, and went, on such occasions, into the barn, and lay down on the hay to read aloud to the others, so as to improve his voice, and enable each to set the other right, if a mistake were made. When the weather became too cold for these readings in the barn, they went into the kitchen, there being no other room in the house in which a fire was kept up.

One November morning there came on a heavy rain that lasted all day, with an east wind so cold as to make the barn a very uncomfortable reading-room, so the boys adjourned to the kitchen, and huddled around the stove. But as the rain drove all the rest of the family into the house, there was so great an assembly in what was, at the best of times, a very small room, that Mrs. Spangler became quite irritable at having so many in her way. She was that day trying out lard, and wanted the stove all to herself. In her ill-humor at being so crowded up, she managed to let the lard burn, and at this she became so vexed that she told Tony, with Joe and Bill, to go out,—she couldn't have them in her way any longer.

They accordingly went back to the barn, and lay down in the hay, covering themselves with a couple of horse-blankets. These were not very nice things for one to have so close to his nose, as they smelt prodigiously strong of the horses; but farmers' boys are used to such perfumes, and they kept the little fellows so warm that they were quite glad to escape the crowd and discomfort of the kitchen. These became at last so great, that even Uncle Benny seeing that he was not wanted there just then, got up and went over to the barn also. There he found Tony reading aloud from a newspaper that had been left at the house by a pedler a few days before. Tony was reading about the election, and how much one set of our people were rejoicing over the result.

As Uncle Benny came in the barn, Tony called out, "Uncle Benny, the President's elected,—did you know it?"

"O yes, I knew it; but what President do you mean?" responded Uncle Benny.

"Why, President Lincoln. He was a poor boy like me, you know.

"But can you tell me, boys," asked Uncle Benny, "who will be President in the year 1900?"

"Dear me, Uncle Benny," replied Tony, "how should we know?"

"Well, I can tell," responded the old man.

The boys were a good deal surprised at hearing these words, and at once sat up in the hay.

"Who is he?" demanded Tony.

"Well," replied Uncle Benny, "he is a boy of about your age, say fifteen or sixteen years old."

"Does he live about here?" inquired Bill, the youngest of the party.

"Well, I can't say as to that," answered the old man, "but he lives somewhere on a farm. He is a steady, thoughtful boy, fond of reading, and has no bad habits; he never swears, or tells a lie, or disobeys his parents."

"Do you think he is as poor as we are, Uncle Benny?" said Tony.

"Most likely he is," responded the old man. "His parents must be in moderate circumstances. But poverty is no disgrace, Tony. On the contrary, there is much in poverty to be thankful for, as there is nothing that so certainly proves what stuff a boy is made of, as being born poor, and from that point working his way up to a position in society, as well as to wealth.

"But do poor boys ever work their way up?" inquired Tony.

"Ay, many times indeed," said Uncle Benny. "But a lazy, idle boy can do no such thing,—he only makes a lazy man. Boys that grow up in idleness become vagabonds. It is from these that all our thieves and paupers come. Men who are successful have always been industrious. Many of the great men in all countries were born poorer than either of you, for they had neither money nor friends. President Lincoln, when he was of your age, was hardly able to read, and had no such chance for schooling as you have had. President Van Buren was so poor, when a boy, that he was obliged to study his books by the light of pine knots which he gathered in the woods. President Lincoln for a long timesplit rails at twenty-five cents a hundred. But you see how they got up in the world."

"But I thought the Presidents were all lawyers," said Tony.

"Well, suppose they were," replied Uncle Benny; "they were boys first. I tell you that every poor boy in this country has a great prospect before him, if he will only improve it as these men improved theirs. Everything depends on himself, on his industry, sobriety, and honesty. They can't all be Presidents, but if they should all happen to try for being one, they will be very likely to reach a high mark. Most of the rich men of our country began