

observant of whatever was going on around him,—of everything from which he could get a new practical hint. Having on one occasion gone to Trenton to dispose of his honey in the market, after he had pocketed his little roll of notes, he strolled leisurely through the long building, from end to end, to see what others had brought there to sell, as well as to learn what prices they were getting. But he saw nothing that attracted his attention particularly, until, on coming out at the lower end, he noticed an old man with a very rude machine resembling that of a perambulating scissors-grinder, having his foot on the treadle, with which he was driving some kind of a mill. He stood quite a long while looking at the machine, endeavoring to ascertain what the old man was doing. While thus standing, several women and children came up in succession, with little cups in their hands, into which the old man measured a gill or two of a white, pulpy preparation, for which each buyer paid him a few cents. It struck him that the old man must be grinding this pulp; so, coming close up to the machine, he at once perceived a strong odor of horseradish. It was this the old fellow was grinding; and Robert saw that he had customers for it as fast as it could be produced. He had seen in the machine-shops about Trenton many great machines, but this was truly a *grater*.

Now he understood all about raising horseradish, and knew that it could be grown more readily even than potatoes; but never having seen it anywhere except on his employer's table, he had no idea that a large quantity could be sold, and hence was greatly surprised at finding how quickly it went off in the market. He immediately inquired of the old man how much he gave for the roots, of which he had a bushel or two in baskets near him. He replied, two dollars a hundred for the smaller ones, and three or four for the largest; adding, that he would buy as many as he could bring him.

The boy was so elated at this unexpected discovery of something that was exactly in his own line, that he asked no more questions. But that evening he looked over all the old numbers of the agricultural papers in the house, to see if they contained any information about the cultivation of horseradish, what was the best soil, whether there was a superior variety, or any other instructions to guide him in undertaking what he shrewdly thought he could make a profitable operation. He found a dozen articles on the subject, which contained the experience of practical growers, with minute directions how to plant and cultivate, as well as how to harvest, a large crop, and where to find a market for it. He had seen these articles before; but as his mind was not interested in the subject at the time, he gave them only a passing notice. But

now that his attention had been directed to it, he discovered in them an almost priceless value. They were exactly what he wanted, and he read them over and over. He made up his mind that, if he had inquired of every farmer in the township how to cultivate so simple a thing as horseradish on a large scale, not one could have told him half as much as did these old numbers of the agricultural papers he had been preserving.

Here Uncle Benny took occasion to remind the boys that it was impossible for a man to be a really good, progressive farmer, without not only having a full supply of the best agricultural papers, but diligently studying their contents, as well as preserving the numbers for future reference. He said they were full of sound advice and instruction, and kept their readers informed of all the new seeds, plants, machines, and breeds of animals, as they were either discovered or introduced. It was only by having his eyes and ears open to these things, that a farmer could get along successfully, and keep up with the best.

He went on to tell them that Robert, discovering that a deep, rich soil was the best for horseradish, immediately made up his mind that the very best place for him to plant it would be by the side of a long ditch in the meadow, which had been cleaned out that very fall. As the ditch-bank could not be used for any crop,—at least his employer was not the man to put it to any useful purpose,—Robert easily obtained his permission to plant it with horseradish. He would have refused anything that he could use himself. As may be supposed, Robert thought of this matter the whole winter, and was impatient for spring to come round, that he might make a beginning. At Christmas he went to Trenton and engaged from the old man in the market as many of the lower ends of the horseradish roots as he would need. On measuring the ditch-bank, by pacing it off, he found he could get in three rows containing altogether two thousand roots, and so contracted for that number at five dollars per thousand. The old man had been in the habit of throwing away these "tails," as there was no steady demand for them, and was glad enough to find a customer.

When April came, Robert put the ditch-bank in order with his own hands, doing most of the work by moonlight, and then actually planting the roots by moonlight also, as his employer would not spare him even a half-day for himself. The roots were about five inches long and were planted in rows. Holes about eight inches deep were made in the ground with a sharp stick, into which the roots were dropped, thus leaving them a few inches below the surface. It was a long and tedious job for a boy like him to undertake and go through