

sum at picking, far more than they had ever had a chance of earning; for the people on that farm had very few encouraging opportunities until Uncle Benny appeared among them. He did not undertake to interfere with the girls' money. But he observed that Nancy Spangler, the eldest invested most of hers in dry goods of different kinds; and that the larger portion of her time was occupied in making up sheets, bed-quilts, pillow-cases and rag-carpet, as if she soon expected to have use for them. He had noticed that a smart young farmer, who lived near by, came very frequently to see Nancy; and, putting those visits and Nancy's sheets and bed-quilts together, he let in an idea that there must be something going on between the young people which would some day make a house as desirable as anything that dry goods could be turned into. Hence he did not venture to financier for Nancy. He thought she was doing well enough, and that her beau could do what financiering she needed.

There was no denying it that Tony King was prodigiously set up about his share of the general profit; and it was noticed that, in talking to other boys about his good luck, he put on some strange airs of superiority, evidently showing that he began to think himself a little great man among those who had been so fortunate. Uncle Benny once overheard him at this, and soon put a stop to it.

"I must tell you Tony," said he, that great men never swell. Mr. Titcomb says:—

"It is only your three-cent, individuals, who are salaried at the rate of two hundred dollars a year, and dine on potatoes and dried herring, who put on airs and flashy waistcoats, swell, blow, and endeavor to give themselves a consequential appearance. No discriminating person need ever mistake the spurious for the genuine article. The difference between the two is as great as that between a barrel of vinegar and a bottle of the pure juice of the grape."

Then on another occasion Tony wanted Uncle Benny to go in and have their brier-patch made three times as large, and they would make three times as much money. But the old man said he did not know about that; he thought they had as much now, of different things, as they could well manage. They were only beginners, and must move ahead cautiously. He told him that judicious improvement or enlargement must progress step by step, and not by great double leaps as he proposed. They must not undertake too much. If he had not enough to do, the best way for him to occupy his spare time and thought would be to build up more compost heaps, as having abundance of them would be found equivalent to having twice as much land in berries.

"The fact is, Tony," said the old man, "you are

like most others,—you want to undertake too much land. It has been long ago ascertained that one acre, under an intelligent and enlightened system of cultivation, will yield as much clear profit as five or six acres tilled in an ignorant and slovenly manner. Look at the farm you are living on. Why, our six acres of berries have paid a greater profit than any twenty of Mr. Spangler's. Wait until you grow stronger, that is, until you have acquired some capital of your own; and by that time I hope you will have learned to understand these matters better, and when you do go ahead, to go with moderation."

"Then can't we have a peach-orchard?" rejoined Tony.

"Not yet," replied the old man; "you have your hands full now."

"Then," added Tony with great emphasis, at the same time slapping his hands together, "I'll have a farm of my own!"

"Ah, now you're getting on the right track," rejoined Uncle Benny. "Go on as you are doing at present, and I have no doubt in good time you will have one. What is more, show yourself to be steady, industrious, honest, and obliging, and friends will spring up to give you a lift when you don't look for them."

It must not be supposed that, while these interesting incidents were occurring, the plants in the two acres devoted to the berries were standing still, or that they had required no attention. On the contrary, they needed even more care than when the field had been planted exclusively in corn. Soon after the blackberries had ripened, the corn was cut and taken to market, where it sold for more than enough money to pay for the plants which had been purchased. Then in August the strawberries began to send out a profusion of runners. The Rawbone had evidently imparted an extraordinary vigor to the plants, as was shown by this ability to produce so vast a quantity of runners. Uncle Benny employed the girls to clip them off with scissors as fast as they appeared. This job had to be done once a week, during the growing season; but the old man had it done thoroughly. It cost a few dollars, but it enabled the girls to earn a little pocket-money; besides, the old man felt satisfied it would be a good investment on the small field he was over-seeing.

One day when Spangler was about beginning to husk out his corn crop, he came up to where Uncle Benny and the boys were standing, with an expression of considerable anxiety on his countenance, and inquired of the old man how they expected to feed their pigs and pigeons the next winter.

"Last year you had corn," said he, "but now you've got nothing but berries."

"Why," replied the old man, "we shall feed them on yours. We can't afford to raise corn. It is