

marl is well known throughout New Jersey as a valuable fertilizer, though not so quickly showing its effects as some other manures. Those dressed from the pig-pen were much better, while the two which had received a mixed dressing of manure and Baugh's Rawbone far exceeded all the others. The berries were fuller in size, and Uncle Benny thought they ripened a day or two in advance. These different manures having been applied in the fall, the winter and spring rains had carried their fertilizing juices down to the roots, thus producing an immediate result.

A great many small boxes were procured, each holding a quart, and these were placed in chests or crates which contained some thirty of them. In this condition the fruit was to be sent to market.

It was really a fine sight to behold this blackberry field when it was fully ripe for the pickers. Both boys and girls turned in with hearty good-will at picking; and to these were added a dozen other children about the same age, some even quitting school to secure the high wages that a smart picker can always earn upon a good crop. The price for picking being two cents a quart, it was an easy thing for the smart hands to earn from a dollar to a dollar and a half per day. Such pay, in all the berry neighborhoods, is a most important help to multitudes of poor families. During the fruit season the younger members quit all other employments and turn out pickers, so that there is never any scarcity of help. In fact, Uncle Benny was astonished at the number that applied for employment. They seemed to spring out of the ground, and he was obliged to turn many away.

The old man acted as boss, or foreman; that is, he gave out the empty boxes to the pickers, who filled and returned them to him at his head-quarters under the shade of a tree. Here he examined the contents, to see that no green fruit had been gathered, and that each box was full, whereupon he gave the picker a ticket for every box; and these tickets being handed in to him when the day's work was done, each picker's account was quickly calculated. They all received their money, and went home rejoicing.

The boxes, when found to be all right, were placed in the chests, and the lid being secured, they were ready for market. Having previously agreed with a fruit-dealer in Trenton to receive and sell his crop, nothing more was necessary than to drive a few miles, and the chests were in the hands of the agent. This gentleman charged a commission for the trouble of selling, and returned the net proceeds once a week.

Though only the common wild blackberry, yet, being put up in clean boxes, they brought a better price than such as came to market in dirty old tin

pans and wooden buckets. Probably one lot tasted as good as the other; but the superior style in which Uncle Benny presented his to purchasers made them sell quickly, as well as bring more than enough advanced in price to pay him for his extra care. It is pretty much the same way with all the fruit that goes to market; the careful man gets paid for his care, and a profit besides.

The crop produced nearly four hundred dollars clear of all expenses of picking and taking to market and selling. This result almost confounded Farmer Spangler, who had never dreamed of having such a gold mine in the "old field." He half regretted having given it up to its present management. The news soon spread round the neighborhood, among those who had ridiculed Uncle Benny and the boys about their blackberry patch; for the old man took pains to let all the particulars be known, and the boys boasted of it wherever they went. They completely turned the laugh against the croakers. Some of the latter became so envious of their success as to wish they owned the patch, or had one like it on their own land.

But though this large profit had been made, yet a considerable sum had to be refunded to Uncle Benny for expenses incurred by him in clearing up the wilderness of bushes into rows, as well as in providing boxes and chests. But these last were only an investment, not a mere expense. They would be wanted another year for the same crop, and also for the other berries, and if the boys ever gave up the business, they could sell them for probably three fourths of the cost. And when these drafts on the sum total of profit had been deducted, there was still about two hundred and fifty dollars left. This Uncle Benny divided into four equal sums, one for Spangler, and one for each of the boys. He then took the latter to Trenton, where there was a savings-bank, and deposited every one's share in his own name. The boys went along, that they might learn how such things were done, as Tony said he didn't know but they might be wanting to make more deposits before long. They were all quite set up with the idea of having money at interest.

It was not of much consequence, in Uncle Benny's opinion, how small the sum was to each. What he valued most was the fact that he had succeeded in teaching the boys how to farm profitably, to save their profits, and make a beginning in the science of thriving and economizing. He had allowed them to spend enough to gratify all their moderate wants, such as, when gratified, would make them entirely happy. It was simply the surplus that he wanted them to save, well knowing that, if not put beyond the reach of every-day temptation, it would soon be gone.

Now, Spangler's girls had made quite a snug little