

will doubt their having done good service to the farming community, or that the more of them we have the better it will be for us; but, considering the size of Uncle Benny's audiences, and the general lack of knowledge pervading them, it may be doubted whether his lectures, delivered sometimes in the barn, sometimes on the rider of a worm-fence, sometimes even when hoeing up weeds, were not quite as productive of good as many others having not only larger audiences, but greater pretensions.

His system had another advantage. The boys always wanted to see the newspaper for themselves to have it in their own hands. This was exactly one of the results the old man was desirous of bringing about, as they were sure to read over the articles he had himself read aloud, besides studying the remaining contents. As he had great faith in the value of agricultural papers among farmers' boys, as well as among farmers too, he kept the boys supplied with all the reading of this kind they desired.

Now it happened, oddly enough, when Tony King said he wanted to give up farming and go to the city, that Uncle Benny had that very week been reading an article in a newspaper which spoke about farmers' boys rushing into it. The old man, being equally opposed to their making such a change, laid it down to Tony very plainly indeed. He told him the idea was absurd; that he didn't know what was best for him; that his great want was to learn to be contented where he was, and to wait until he was at least five years older and wiser before he thought any more of changing. Then, by way of settling the matter, he drew the paper from his pocket and read as follows:

"The very worst thing a country boy can do is to leave the farm and come to the city, in hopes of doing better. Yet they come here every week by dozens, giving up good places where they are well taken care of, and pitch in among a crowd of strangers who take no notice of them, or give short answers when they are applied to for a situation, or even a small job. They take it for granted that there is always plenty to do here, and that it is an easy thing to get a situation in a store or counting-house, where there is little to do and good pay for doing it. They see that the clerks and shop-boys who sometimes come among them in the country are well-dressed and smart-looking fellows, with plenty of money in their pockets, which they spend as freely as if there was no end to it,—gunning, boating, hiring carriages to drive the girls about, &c. They think that these smart clerks must have a capital life of it in the city. They also now and then hear of a poor country boy who went into a

city store and made a fortune in a very short time. Thus they get to envying the life of the town boys, and are uneasy and restless until they make the trial of finding out how difficult and dangerous such a life is. They see only the bright side of the picture.

"But all these boys are greatly mistaken. It may look very genteel and easy to stand behind a counter and do nothing but measure out goods, but it is close and confining labor nevertheless. If it is cleaner work than scraping up a barn-yard or currying down a horse, it is not half so wholesome. Besides, it is not an easy matter to get a situation in a store. Our city is full of boys born among us, whose parents find great difficulty in obtaining places for them. Many of these boys go into stores and offices without getting a dollar of pay. The privilege of being taught how to do business is considered compensation enough—they actually work for nothing and find themselves. Our store-boys have no time for play. They have no green fields to look at or ramble over, nothing but dust, and mud, and hot bricks, with quite as much real hard work as the country boys, only it is of a different kind. What boy of the right spirit would desire to come here and merely run of shop errands all day, learning nothing but how to go about town, when he could stay in the country, sure to learn how to get a living? Besides, a boy here is surrounded by temptations to ruin, and the poorer he is the more certain are they to lead him astray. Where one such does well, there are two who turn out thieves or vagabonds. We say to you, boys, stay on the farms where you are. If you are determined to come, don't come without you have some friend here who will receive you into his house, provide you with employment, and take care of you. But, anyhow, wait till you are older, say twenty-one at least. Then, if you don't think better of it, you will be somewhat able to fight your way, for here there is nothing but fighting."

As the old man read this very deliberately, the boys listened with the utmost attention. "There!" said he, when he had finished, "that man knows what he says. He lives in the city, and understands about it. You see that he advises you exactly as I do."

This unexpected confirmation had a powerful effect on the minds of all the boys. It applied so directly to Tony's case, as to make him think differently of the chances of a city life. As usual, he wanted to see the article for himself, and, beginning to read it aloud to the other boys, the old man left the barn, thinking that a little free conversation on the subject among themselves would do no harm.