

—above, below, and around the drains," replied Uncle Benny. "When a rain falls, it soaks its way down through the earth, that is, all that the earth don't require, and finds its way into the underdrains, and then runs off as you see. Then the water which rises from the springs under this meadow finds its way also into the drains, and is carried off like the surplus rain-water. If it were not for these drains the land would be so water-lodged that nothing but wild grasses and aquatic plants would grow on it; but now you see it is yielding the very finest kind of grass. If your father's meadow, now filled with ferns and skunk-root, were drained as this is, it would be quite as productive."

"Quite as good," added Mr. Allen. "This meadow was as foul and worthless as Mr. Spangler's when I began to underdrain. I never spent any money that paid me half as well as the money I have laid out in underdraining. It cost me about three hundred dollars to do this work, but the land is a thousand dollars better for it,—in fact, it was good for nothing as it lay a few years ago. All the water you see pouring out of these drains was formerly retained in the ground. It is just so much more than the land required."

Now it has exactly enough, and it is the difference between enough and too much that converts a meadow into bog, or a bog into a meadow.

"When I was a boy," he continued, "it was on the margin of this long ditch that I made the first attempt at farming for myself. It was a rough place then, Uncle Benny, and I had a hard row to hoe. My crop of horseradish from this ground was the beginning of my success in life. I made only a little money, it is true, but it was a great deal for a boy. I can see now that its value was not in the number of dollars I made, but in the stimulus it gave to my energies. It braced me up, it gave me confidence in my own powers, it taught me not only that I was able to do something for myself, but exactly how to do it. Still, it was very satisfactory to know that I was making money, young as I was, but I have never sought to make money merely for the love of it, but only that it might be used wisely and generously,—the only way in which it can be profitably expended."

"Now, my lads," he continued, addressing himself to the boys, "I have heard of a youth who once picked up a guinea lying in the road. Ever afterwards, so the story goes, he kept his eyes steadfastly fixed on the ground, in hopes of finding another, and in the course of a long life he did pick up at times a good amount of gold and silver. But all these days, as he was looking for gold, he saw not that heaven was bright above him, and nature beautiful around him. He never once allowed his eyes to look up from the mud and filth in which he

sought the treasure, and when he died, a rich old man, he only knew this fair earth of ours as a dirty road in which to pick up money as you walk along. Boys, you were not made for a pursuit so degrading as this. Remember it when your turn comes."

"But," added Uncle Benny, "if you found the cultivation of horseradish so profitable, why did you abandon it?"

"Bless you," Uncle Benny," he replied, "I have never quitted it from the day I set the first root into the ground up to the present hour. On the contrary, I have enlarged my operations in that line perhaps a hundred-fold. Come this way and see what we are doing."

He then led them to the upper end of the meadow, where the ground was higher and drier, though it had also been underdrained. Here were three acres set with horseradish. The harrow had just been run over the field between the rows, and the green tops were peeping here and there above the surface. Uncle Benny had travelled all the world over, and, as he was sometimes disposed to think, had seen everything there was in it. But he admitted that here was a thing new, even to him; he had never stumbled on a three-acre field of horseradish until now. It was as great a novelty to the boys, who knew nothing more of the cultivation of the plant than seeing a few roots growing on the edge of a dirty gutter at home, while they were utterly ignorant of its marketable capabilities. They could tell everything about corn, but not an item about horseradish. Uncle Benny knew there must be some kind of a demand for it, but how extensive that might be he had never had occasion to learn. Hence he and his pupils stood in silent surprise at this unexpected exhibition.

"But, what is to become of the vast quantity of roots you are producing here?" inquired Uncle Benny. "Does the world want as much horseradish as this? Who is to buy it, and who is to eat it?"

"Not a bit of fear as to a market," replied Mr. Allen, smiling at the old man's surprise and incredulity. "New York never has enough, never had, and never will have. One dealer in that city takes my whole crop, and is annually calling for more. I am determined next year to double the quantity of ground already planted."

"You surprise me," said the old man. "Then the crop must pay. How many roots can you grow upon an acre?"

"Why, you see these rows are three feet apart, and the plants are set one foot asunder in the rows, thus giving me nearly fifteen thousand per acre. At that distance, on suitable soil, the average weight per root would be one pound. The rows are just wide enough apart to get safely through with a small cultivator, so as to keep down the weeds,—