

Mr. Allen and his sons. But such is generally the reward of agricultural effort in any direction different from the old routine. There are plenty to laugh at the pioneer, and few to encourage him.

One day when the party came up to the fence, at the end of the row they had just been cleaning, they were accosted in a very coarse way by a neighbor who was known to be the laziest and worst-mannered fellow in the township. He had mounted the top rail, and there sat until they came up to him.

"Well, blackberry farmers!" said he, "you begin poor, you'll keep poor, and you'll die poor!"

"You're a fool!" replied Tomy King, with an energy that showed how strongly he resented this rude speech of the loafer.

"Hush, Tomy!" interrupted Uncle Benny; "let him have his own idle way, and let us pursue ours. We shall see which of us will first go to the poor-house. Come, boys!"

Then starting on another row, they left the rude fellow to his own thoughts. After getting away down the row, clear out of sight and hearing, Uncle Benny halted the boys from their work, and drew a small book from his pocket. He had been all the time thinking of the sneer which the loafer had made at the boys being poor, as if poverty were the worst thing in the world that could happen to them; and he was desirous of correcting any wrong impression that even this worthless fellow might have made upon their minds.

"Now, boys," he said, as each leaned upon his hoe, "this fellow you left on the fence seems to think the worst lot for a boy is to be born poor."

"Well, it's pretty bad," replied Tony King.

"But it is not so," rejoined the old man. "Let me read you what is said by a man who knows probably as much as all of us together. His name is Titcomb, and he has written a great many lively and sensible books. Now listen," and he read as follows:—

"If there is anything in the world that a young man should be more thankful for than another, it is the poverty which necessitates his starting in life under very great disadvantages. Poverty is one of the best tests of human quality in existence. A triumph over it is like graduating with honor from West Point. It demonstrates stuff and stamina. It is a certificate of worthy labor creditably performed. A young man who cannot stand the test is not worth anything. He can never rise above a drudge or a pauper. A young man who cannot feel his way, may as well retire into some corner and hide himself. Poverty saves a thousand times more than it ruins; for it only ruins those who are not particularly worth saving, while it saves multitudes of those

whom wealth would have ruined. If any young man who reads this is so unfortunate as to be rich, I give him pity. I pity you, my rich young friend, because you are in danger. You lack one stimulus to effort and excellence which your poor companion possesses. You will be very apt, if you have a soft spot in your head, to think yourself above him; and that sort of thing makes you mean, and injures you. With full pockets and full stomach, and fine linen and broadcloth on your back, your heart and soul plethoric, in the race of life you will find yourself surpassed by all the poor boys around you before you know it.

"No, my boy, if you are poor, thank God, and take courage; for he intends to give you a chance to make something of yourself. If you had plenty of money, ten chances to one it would spoil you for all useful purposes. Do you lack education? Have you been cut short in your text-book? Remember that education, like some other things, does not consist in the multitude of things a man possesses.

"What can you do? That is the question that settles the business for you. Do you know your business? Do you know men, and how to deal with them? Has your mind, by any means whatsoever, received that discipline which gives to it action power and facility? If so, then you are more of a man and a thousand times better educated than the fellow who graduates from college with his brains full of stuff that he cannot apply to the practical business of life,—stuff, the acquisition of which has been in no sense a disciplinary process as far as he is concerned."

"Well," observed Tony, when the reading was over, "that does me good. I think I feel better for it." and, in fact, there was a general expression in favor of Mr. Titcomb's views, which was continued at intervals during the remainder of that day's work. On the whole, Uncle Benny thought the rude taunt of the loafer had proved rather an advantage than otherwise.

But every seed-time has its harvest. So this care on the blackberries was about to be rewarded. In July the berries had turned black, and were beginning to ripen. Uncle Benny had carefully watched the gradual swelling of the fruit as it approached its full size, anxious to know whether the cultivated berry would be any larger and better than the wild one. In these examinations he called in the critical eyes of the boys to know if they could discover any improvement over old times. The unanimous conclusion was that there could be no mistake about the matter, and that the berries were certainly larger and better.

Then as to the different manures they had applied. The two rows dressed with marl were excellent, as