

## 17

## MY SECOND YEAR

Winter passed away and the time for labor and the singing of birds again returned. Long before the land in Pennsylvania was fit to plow, the admirable soil of New Jersey had been turned over and planted with early peas. It is at all times fit for plowing except when actually frozen hard. Even after heavy rains, when denser soils require two weeks' drying before getting into condition for the plow, it is ready in a day or two. Its sandy character, instead of being a disadvantage, is one of its highest recommendations.

It is thus two to three weeks earlier in yielding up its ripened products for market. Peas are the first things planted in the open fields. The traveller coming from the north, when passing by rail to Philadelphia through this genial region, has been frequently surprised at seeing the young pea vines peeping up above a thin covering of snow, their long rows of delicate green stretching across extensive fields, and presenting a singular contrast with the fleecy covering around them. Naturally hardy, they survive the cold, and as the snow rapidly disappears they immediately renew their growth.

## TRENCHING THE GARDEN

Having been much surprised by the profit yielded last year from the garden, I was determined to give it a better chance than ever, and to try the effect of thorough farming on a limited scale. I accordingly set Dick to covering it fully three inches deep with well-rotted stable-manure, of which I had purchased \$200 worth in the city, though hoping that I

could arrange not to make so heavy a cash outlay for this material in the future. I then procured him a spade fifteen inches long in the blade, and set him to trenching every inch of the garden not occupied by standard fruits. These had luckily been arranged in rows and borders by themselves, thus leaving large, open beds, in which the operation of trenching could be thoroughly used. I estimated the open ground to be nearly half an acre.

I began by digging a trench from one end of the open space to the other, three feet wide and two deep, removing the earth to the further side of the open space. Then the bottom of the trench was dug up with the fifteen-inch spade, and covered lightly with manure.

The adjoining ground was then thrown in, mixing the topsoil as we went along, and also an abundance of manure, until the trench was filled. As the earth was all taken from the adjoining strip of three feet wide, of course, as the trench was filled, another trench appeared beside it. The operation was repeated until all the garden had been thoroughly gone over. The earth which had been removed from the first trench went into the last one.

But I was careful not to place the top soil in a body at the bottom, but scattered it well through the whole of the filling. The roots of every plant would find some portion of it, let them travel where they might. On the whole job we bestowed a great amount of care, but it was such a job as would not require repeating for years, and would be permanently beneficial. I deposited \$50 worth of manure as a fund of nourishment on which my vegetables could draw with certainty of profit.

A surface soil of a few inches will not answer for a good garden. The roots of succulent vegetables must extend into a deeper bed of fertility; and a greater depth of pulverization is required to absorb surplus rains, and to give off the accumulated moisture in dry weather. A shallow soil will become deluged by a single shower, because the hard subsoil will not

allow it to pass downward; and again, in the heat and drought of midsummer, a thin stratum is made dry and parched in a week, while one of greater depth becomes scarcely affected. I might cite numerous instances, besides my own, where trenched gardens remained luxuriant during severe droughts, when others under ordinary management were nearly burnt up with the heat, the leaves curled and withering for want of moisture.

The mode of trenching must vary with circumstances. In small, circumscribed pieces of ground, necessity requires it to be done by hand, as has been just described. In large spaces the subsoil plow may be used, but not to equal benefit.

There are many reasons why the soils of gardens should be made better than for ordinary farm crops. Most of the products of gardens are of a succulent nature, or will otherwise bear high feeding, such as garden roots in general, plants whose leaves furnish food, as salad, cabbages, etc., or those which produce large and succulent fruits, as cucumbers, melons, squashes, etc. As nearly all garden crops are the immediate food of man, while many farm crops are only the coarser food of animals, greater care and skill may properly be applied in bringing the former forward to a high degree of perfection. The great amount of family supplies which may be obtained from a half-acre garden, renders it a matter of importance and economy to give the soil the best preparation.

It rarely happens that there is much selection to be made in soils, for gardening purposes, unless particular attention is given choosing a site for a new dwelling. We have to take the land as we find it. Unless, we happen to find it just right, we should try to improve it in the best manner. The principal means for making a perfect garden soil, are draining, trenching, and manuring.

The entire expense of preparing half an acre would not, in general, amount to more than the amount saved in a

single year in the purchase of food for family supplies. If the owner cannot possibly prepare his half or quarter acre of land properly, then let him occupy the ground with something else than garden crops, and take only a single square rod [*about 260 square feet*] (if he cannot attend to more), and give this the most perfect preparation. A square rod of rich, luxuriant vegetables will be found more valuable than eighty rods (or half an acre) of scant, dwarfed, and stringy growth which no one will wish to eat. Let the determination be made, therefore, at the commencement, to take no more land than can be properly prepared in the most thorough manner.

The ten peach trees in the garden were thoroughly manured by digging in around them all the coal ashes made during the winter, first sifting them well. No stable manure was added, as it promotes too rank and watery a growth in the peach, while ashes of any kind are what this fruit most delights in. Then the butts were examined for worms, but the last year's application of tar had kept off the fly, and the old ravages of the enemy were found to be nearly healed over by the growth of new bark. A fresh coating of tar was applied, and thus everything was made safe.

As the season advanced, my wife and daughter took charge of the garden as before, with high hopes of greater success than ever. They had one year's experience, while now the ground was in far better condition. They seemed to have forgotten all about the weeds, as in calculating their prospective profits they did not mention them even once. I was careful not to do so, though I had my own suspicions on the subject.

When the planting had been done, and things went on growing well as the season advanced, they were suddenly reminded of their ancient enemy. The trenching and manuring had done as much for the weeds as for the vegetables. Why should they not? In her innocence, Kate thought the weeds should all have been buried in the trenches, as if their

seeds had been deposited exclusively on the surface. But they grew more rampantly than ever during the entire season, and to my mind they seemed to be in greater quantity. But this worked no discouragement to either wife or daughter. They waged against them the same resolute warfare, early, late, and in the noonday sun, until Kate, in spite of a capacious sunbonnet, became a nut-brown maid. Not a weed was permitted to reach maturity.

The careful culture of the garden this year gave them even a better reward than it had done the year before. The failures of the last season were all avoided. Several kinds of seeds were soaked before being planted, which prevented failure and secured a quicker growth. In addition to this, they raised a greater variety of vegetables expressly for the store; and with some, such as radishes and beets, they were particularly lucky, and realized high prices for all they grew. The high manuring and extra care bestowed upon the asparagus were apparent in the quick and vigorous shooting up of thick and tender roots, far more than we could consume, and so superior to any others that were taken to the store that they sold rapidly at city prices. Thus they began to make sales earlier in the season, while their crops were far more abundant. The trenching and manuring was evidently a paying investment.

In addition to all this, the season proved to be a good one for fruit. The garden trees bore abundantly. My ten peach trees had by this time been rejuvenated, and were loaded with fruit. When as large as hickory nuts, I began the operation of removing all the smallest, and of thinning them out unsparingly wherever they were crowded.

After going over five trees, I brought a bucketful of the expurgated peaches to my wife for exhibition. She seemed panic-stricken at the sight—protested that we should have no peaches that season, if I went on at that rate—asked me to remember my peculiar weakness for pies—and pleaded so eloquently that the other trees should not be stripped, as to

induce me, to suspend my ravages. Thus five had been thinned and five left untouched.

The peaches on the five denuded trees grew much larger and finer than those on the other five. I gathered them carefully and sent them to the city, where they brought me \$41 clear of expenses, while the fruit from the other trees, sent to market with similar care, netted only \$17, and those used in the family from the same trees, estimated at the same rates, were worth \$9, making, on those five, a difference of \$15 in favor of thinning. Thus, the ten produced \$58 [*\$1,300 in 2008*], but if all had been thinned, the product would have been \$82 [*\$1,900 in 2008*].

This unexpected result satisfied my wife ever afterwards that it was quality, not mere quantity, that the market wanted. Her own garden sales would have convinced her of this, had she observed them closely; but having overlooked results there, it required an illustration too striking to be gainsaid, and this the peach trees furnished.

All these figures appear in Kate's account book. I had provided her with one expressly for the garden operations, a nice gold pen, and every other possible convenience for making entries at the moment any transaction occurred. I had also taught her the simplest form for keeping her accounts, and caused her to keep a passbook with the store, in which every consignment should be entered, so that her book and the storekeeper's should be a check on errors that might be found in either. She became extremely expert at her accounts, and as she took a special interest in the matter, could tell from memory, at the week's end, how many dollars' worth of produce she had sold. I found the amount running up quite hopefully as the season advanced, and when it had closed, she announced the total to be \$63 without the peaches, or \$121 by including them. [*\$1,400 and \$2800 in 2008 dollars, respectively.*]

## THE REST OF THE FARM

On my nine acres of plowed land there was plenty of work to be done. Our old enemy, the weeds, did not seem to have diminished in number, notwithstanding our slaughter the previous year. They came up as thick and vigorous as ever, and required quite as much labor to master them, as the hoe was oftener required among the rows of raspberries and strawberries.

My dogged fellow, Dick, took this matter with perfect unconcern—said he knew it would be so, and that I would find the weeds could not be killed—but he might as well work among them as at anything else. I ceased to argue with him on the subject, and as I had faith in coming out right in the end, I bided my time.

This year I planted an acre with tomatoes, having raised abundance of fine plants in a hotbed, as well as egg-plants for the garden. I set them out in rows, three and one-half feet apart each way, and manured them twice as heavily as many of my neighbors did. This gave me 3,760 plants to the acre. The results were almost incredible, and amounted to 501 bushels, or about five quarts a hill, a far better yield than I had the first year. From some hills as many as ten quarts each were gathered.

I managed to get twenty baskets into New York market among the very first of the season, where they netted me \$60 [*\$1,400 in 2008*]. The next twenty netted \$25, the next twenty only \$15, [*\$570 and \$340, respectively*] as numerous competitors came in and the next thirty cleared no more. After that the usual glut came on, and down went the price to twenty and even fifteen cents, But at twenty and twenty-five [*\$4.60-\$5.70*] I continued to forward to Philadelphia, where they paid better than to let them rot on the ground. From 200 baskets at these low prices I netted \$35 [*\$800*]. Then, in the height of the season, all picking was suspended, except for the pigs, who had any quantity they

could consume. But the glut gradually subsided as tomatoes perished on the vines, and the price again rose in market to twenty-five cents, then to fifty, then to a dollar, and upwards. But my acre afforded me little at the close of the season. I did not manage to realize \$40 from the tail-end of the year, making a total net yield of \$190 [*\$4,300 in 2008*].

Others near me, older hands at the business, did much better, but I thought this well enough. I would prefer raising tomatoes at 37 cents a bushel to potatoes at 76. The amount realized from an acre far exceeds that of potatoes. A brisk man will gather from sixty to seventy bushels a day. The expense of cultivating, using plenty of manure, is about \$60 per acre, and the gross yield may be safely calculated \$250, leaving about \$200 sure surplus [*\$4,600 in 2008*]. If it were not for the sudden and tremendous fall in prices to which tomatoes are subject soon after they come into market, growers might become rich in a few years.

The other acre was occupied with corn, roots, and cabbage for winter feeding, and with potatoes for family use. Turnips were sowed wherever room could be found for them, and no spot about the farm was permitted to remain idle. A hill of corn, a cabbage, a pumpkin vine, or whatever else was suited to it, was planted. But of potatoes we did sell enough to amount to \$24 [*\$550 in 2008*]. On the acre occupied with blackberries, early cabbages were planted to the number of 4,000. Many of these, of course, were small and not marketable, though well manured and carefully attended. But all were very acceptable in the barnyard and pigpen. Of sound cabbages I sold 3,120, at an average of two and one-quarter cents, amounting to \$70.20 [*\$1,600 in 2008*]. I cannot tell how it was, but other persons close to me raised larger and better heads, and of course received better prices. But I had no reason to complain.

## STRAWBERRY PROFITS

The strawberries came first into market. I had labored to allow no runners to grow and take root except such as were necessary to fill up the line of each row. Most of the others had been clipped off as fast as they showed themselves. Thus the whole strength of the plant was concentrated into the fruit.

In other words, I set out to raise fruit, not plants; and my rows were, therefore, composed of single stools, standing about four to six inches apart in the row. The ground between the rows was consequently clear for the passage of the horse weeder, which kept it nice and clean throughout the season, and there was no sort of difficulty in getting between the stools with either the hand, or a small hoe, to keep out grass and weeds. The stools were consequently strong and healthy, and stood up higher from the ground than plants which grow in matted beds, thus measurably keeping clear of the sand and grit which heavy rains throw up on berries that lie very near the ground. The truth is, the ground for a foot all round each stool ought to have had a covering of cut straw, leaves, or something else for the fruit to rest upon, to keep them clean, as well as to preserve them from drought. But I did not so well understand the question at that time as I do now.

The fruit ripened beautifully, and grew to prodigious size, larger than most we had ever seen. The several pickings of the first week yielded 600 quart boxes of the choicest fruit, which I dispatched by railroad to an agent in New York, with whom I had previously made arrangements to receive them. The greatest care was used in preparing them for market. When taken from the vines they were put directly into the small boxes, and these carried to the house, where, under a large shed adjoining the kitchen, my wife and daughters had made preparations to receive them. Here they were spread out on a large pine table, and all the larger

berries separated from the smaller ones, each kind being put into boxes which were kept separate from the other. The show made by fruit thus assorted was truly magnificent, and to the pleasure my wife experienced in handling and arranging it, she was constantly testifying. Thus 600 quarts of the finest fruit we had ever beheld, were sent the first week to New York. It was, of course, nearly ten days ahead of the season in that region—there could be no New York grown berries in market. At the week's end the agent remitted me \$300 clear of freight and commission [*\$6,800 in 2008*]. They had netted me half a dollar a quart. I was greatly astonished and delighted—it was easily twice as much as we had expected. When I showed the agent's letter to my wife, she was amazed. Kate, who had heard a good deal of complaint about high prices, while we lived in the city, after reading the letter, laid it down, observing— “I think it will not do to complain of high prices now!,’

“No,” replied my wife, “the tables are turned. Half a dollar a quart! How much I pity those poor people.”

And as she said this, I handed her a quart bowl of the luscious fruit, which I had been sugaring heavily while she was studying out the figures in the agent's letter, and I feel persuaded no lover of strawberries ever consumed them with more relish.

The agent spoke in his letter of the admirable manner in which our berries were forwarded—all alike, all uniformly prime large fruit—not merely big ones on top of the box as decoys, and little runts at bottom. This established for us a reputation; our boxes could be guaranteed to contain prime fruit all through. Hence the agent could sell any quantity we could send. Thus we continued to pick over our vines from three to four times weekly. As the ripening of the fruit went on, the sight was truly marvellous to look at. When the season was at its height, the ground seemed almost red with berries. We had twenty girls and boys engaged in picking berries at two cents a quart [*\$0.46 in 2008*]. Industrious

little toilers they were, many of them earning from one to two dollars daily [*\$23-\$46 in 2008*]. Some pickers were grown women, some widows, some even aged women. It was a harvest to them also.

The small boxes were packed in chests each holding from twenty-four to sixty, just nicely filling the chest, so that there should be no rattling or shaking about, or spilling over of the fruit. The lid, when fastened, held everything snug. These chests were taken to the nearby railroad station the same afternoon the berries were picked, and reached New York the same night. The agents knowing they were coming, had them all sold before they arrived, and immediately delivering them to the wholesalers, they in turn delivered them to the grocers, and thus in less than twenty-four hours from the time of leaving my ground, they were in the hands of the consumers.

This whole business of conveying fruit to distant markets by steamboat and rail is thoroughly systematized. It is an immense item in the general freight list of the great seaboard railroads, constantly growing, and as surely enriching both grower and carrier. For the former it insures a sale of all his products in the highest markets, and in fact brings them to his very door.

My agents were punctual in advising me by the first mail, and sometimes by telegraph, of the sale and price of each consignment, thus keeping me constantly posted up as to the condition of the market. They paid the freight on each consignment, deducted it from the proceeds, and returned the chests, though sometimes with a few small boxes missing (a loss to which growers will be subjected, so long as they use a box which they cannot afford to give away with the fruit). I thus fed the northern cities as long as the price was maintained. But, as is the case with all market produce, prices gradually declined as other growers came in, for all hands sought to sell in the best market. As the end of the season is generally a period of very low prices, it must be

counteracted by every effort to secure high ones at the beginning, in this way maintaining a remunerative average during the whole. Thus, the half-dollar per quart which I obtained for the first and best, by equalization with lower prices through the remainder of the season, was unable to raise the average of the whole crop above sixteen cents net. But this abundantly satisfied me, as I sent to market 5,360 quarts, thus producing \$857.60 [*\$19,600 in 2008*].

Besides these, we had the satisfaction of making generous presents to some particular friends in the city, while at home we feasted upon them daily, and laid by an extraordinary quantity of preserves for winter use, a luxury in which we had never indulged in the city. I may add that during the whole strawberry season it was observed that our city friends seemed to take an extraordinary interest in our proceedings and success. They came up to see us even more numerously than during the dog days, and no great effort was required, no second invitation necessary, to induce them to prolong their visits. But we considered them entirely excusable. In the busiest part of the season our female visitors rolled up their sleeves, and assisted my wife and daughters for hours at a time, aiding them in assorting and boxing the huge quantities of noble fruit as it came in from the field.

In order to send this fruit to market, I was obliged to purchase 3,000 quart boxes, and 50 chests to contain them. These cost me \$200 [*\$4,600 in 2008*]. I could not fill all the boxes at each picking, but as one set of boxes was away off in market, it was necessary for me to have duplicates on hand, in which to pick other berries as they ripened, without being compelled to wait until the first lot of boxes came back.

Sometimes it was a week or ten days before they were returned to me. Thus, one supply of boxes filled with fruit was constantly going forward, while another of empty ones was on the way back. So extensive has this berry business become, that I could name parties who have as much as

\$500 to \$1,500 [*\$11,000-\$34,000 in 2008*] invested in chests and boxes for the transportation of fruit to market. But their profits are in proportion to the extent of their investment.

While on this subject of boxes for the transportation of fruit to distant markets, a suggestion occurs to me which some ingenious man may be able to work up into profitable use. It is sometimes quite difficult for the grower to get his chests returned at the proper time. Sometimes the agent is careless and keeps them twice as long as he ought to, when the owner really needs them. Sometimes an accident on the railroad delays their return for a week or ten days. In either case, the grower is subjected to great inconvenience; and if his chests fail to return, his ripened fruit will perish on his hands for want of boxes in which to send them off. It is to be always safe from these contingencies that he finds it necessary to keep so large a quantity on hand. Then, many of the boxes are never returned, the chests coming back only half or quarter filled. All this is very unjustly made the grower's loss.

But a remedy for this evil can and ought to be provided. The trade needs a box so cheap that it can be given away. Then, being packed in rough, open crates, cheaply put together of common lath, with latticed sides, neither crates nor boxes need be returned. The grower will save the return freight, and be in no danger of ever being short of boxes by the negligence of others. This is really a very urgent demand of the trade.

## RASPBERRIES

To strawberries succeeded raspberries. My stock of boxes was thus useful a second time. But raspberries are not always reliable for a full crop the first season after planting, and so it turned out with mine. They bore only moderately; but by exercising the same care in rejecting all inferior spec-

imens, the first commanded twenty-five cents a quart in market; gradually declining to twelve, below which none were sold. I marketed only 242 quarts from the whole, netting an average of 16 cents a quart, or \$38.72 [*\$880 in 2008*]. In price they were thus equal to strawberries. In addition to this, we consumed in the family as much as all desired, and that was not small. I had heard of others doing considerably better than this, but felt no reason to be dissatisfied.

The trade in raspberries is increasing rapidly in the neighborhood of all our large cities, stimulated by the establishment of steamboats and railroads, on which they go so quickly and cheaply to market. It is probably greater in New York State than elsewhere. The citizens of Marlborough, in Ulster county, have a steamboat regularly employed for almost the sole business of transporting their raspberries to New York. In a single season their sales of this fruit amount to nearly \$90,000 [*\$2.1 million in 2008*]. The demand is inexhaustible, and the cultivation consequently increases. In the immediate vicinity of Milton, in the same county, there are over 100 acres of them, and new plantations are being annually established. The pickers are on the ground as soon as the dew is off, as the berries do not keep so well when gathered wet. I have there seen fifty pickers at work at the same time, men, women, and children, some of them astonishingly expert, earning as much as \$2 in a day [*\$46 in 2008*]. Several persons were constantly employed in packing the neat little baskets into crates, the baskets holding nearly a pint. By six o'clock the crates were put on board the steamboat, and by sunrise next morning they were in Washington market. As many as 80,000 baskets are carried at a single trip. The retail price averages ten cents a basket, one boat thus carrying \$800 worth [*\$18,000 in 2008*] in a single day. All this cultivation being conducted in a large way, the yield per acre is consequently less than from small patches thoroughly attended to. There are repeated instances of

\$400 and even \$600 being made clear from a single acre of raspberries [*\$9,000-\$14,000 in 2008*].

The culture in Ulster county, though at first view appearing small, yet gives employment to thousands of persons. The mere culture requires the services of a large number of people. The pickers there, as well as in New Jersey, constitute a small army, there being five or more required for each acre, and the moneys thus earned by these industrious people go far towards making entire families comfortable during some months of the year. The season for raspberries continues about six weeks.

### THE LAWTONS

As my raspberries disappeared, so in regular succession came the Lawton blackberries. I had cut off the tip of every cane the preceding July. This, by stopping the upward growth, drove the whole energy of the plant into the formation of branches. These had in turn been shortened to a foot in length at the close of last season. This process, by limiting the quantity of fruit to be produced, increased the size of the berries. I am certain of this fact, by long experience with this plant. It also prevented the ends of the branches resting on the ground, when all fruit there produced would otherwise be ruined by being covered with dust or mud. Besides, this was their first bearing year, and as they had not had time to acquire a full supply of roots, it would be unwise to let them overbear themselves. Some few which had grown to a great height were staked up with pickets four and a half feet long, and tied, the pickets costing \$11 per thousand [*\$250 in 2008*] at the lumber yard. But the majority did not need this staking up the first season; but many of the canes sent up this year, for bearers the next, it was necessary to support with stakes.

The crop was excellent in quality, but not large. I began picking July 20, and thus had the third use of my

stock of boxes. I used the same care in assorting these berries for market which had been observed with the others, keeping the larger ones separate from the smallest ones. Thus a chest of the selected berries, when exposed to view, presented a truly magnificent sight. Up to this time they had never been seen by fifty shoppers of the Philadelphia markets. But when this rare display was first opened in two of the principal markets, it produced a great sensation. None had been picked until perfectly ripe, hence the rare and melting flavor peculiar to the Lawton pervaded every berry. They sold rapidly and netted me thirty cents a quart, the smaller ones twenty-five cents. There appeared to be no limit to the demand at these prices. Buyers cheerfully gave them, though they could get the common wild blackberry in the same market at ten cents. Now, it cost me no more to raise the Lawtons than it would have done to raise the common article. But this is merely another illustration of the folly of raising the poorest fruit to sell at the lowest prices, instead of the best to sell at the highest.

The crop of Lawtons amounted to five hundred and ninety-two quarts, and netted me \$159.84 [*\$3,600 in 2008*], an average of twenty-seven cents a quart [*\$6.20 in 2008*]. My family did not fail to eat even more than a usual allowance. As soon as the picking was done, while the plants were yet covered with leaves, Dick cut off at the ground all the canes which had just fruited, using a strong pair of snip-shears, which cut them through without any labor. These canes, having done their duty, would die in the autumn, but could now be more easily cut than when grown hard after death, and if removed at once, would be out of the way of the new canes of this year's growth.

The latter could then be trimmed and staked up for the coming year, the removal of all which superfluous foliage would let in the sun and air more freely to the cabbages between the rows. The old wood being thus cut out, was gathered in a heap, and when dry enough was burned, the

ashes being collected and scattered around the peach trees. After this the limbs were all shortened in to a foot. They were very strong and vigorous, as in July the tops of the canes had all been taken off, leaving no cane more than four feet high. The branches were consequently very strong, giving promise of a fine crop another season. After this, such as needed it were staked up and tied, as the autumn and winter winds so blow and twist them about that otherwise they would be broken off. But subsequent practice has induced me to cut down to only three feet high; and this being done in July, when the plant is in full growth, the cane becomes so stiff and stocky before losing its leaves as to require no staking, and will support itself under any ordinary storm.

I have seen growers of this fruit who neglected for two or three years, either from laziness or carelessness, to remove the old wood; but it made terrible work for the pickers, as in order to get at one year's fruit they were compelled to contend with three years' briars. I prefer removing it in the autumn, as soon as picking is over, for reasons above given, and also because at that time there is less to do than in the spring.

In the meantime the fame of the Lawton blackberry had greatly extended and the demand increased, but the propagation had also been stimulated. A class of growers had omitted tilling their grounds, so as to promote the growth of suckers, caring more for the sale of plants than for that of fruit. Hence the quantity grown was large enough to reduce the price, but I sold of this year's growth enough plants to produce me \$213.50 [*\$4,900 in 2008*]. Of this I laid out \$54 [*\$1,200 in 2008*] in marl [*a lime-like rock used as fertilizer*], which I devoted exclusively to the blackberries. I had been advised by a friend that marl was the specific fertilizer for this plant, as of his own knowledge he knew it to be so. A half-peck was spread round each hill, and the remainder scattered over the ground. A single row was left unmarled. It showed the power of this fertilizer the next sea-

son, as the rows thus manured were much better filled with fruit than that which received none. Since that I have continued to use this fertilizer on my blackberries, and can from experience recommend its use to all who may cultivate them.

## RESULTS OF MY SECOND YEAR

With the sale of pork, amounting to \$58 [*\$1,300 in 2008*], the receipts of my second year terminated. My cashbook showed the following receipts and expenditures:

<b>Item</b>	<b>Actual Expens- es</b>	<b>In 2008 Dollars</b>
Paid for stable manure	\$200.00	\$4,600
Ashes and Baugh's rawbone super-phosphate	92.00	1,900
Marl	94.00	2,100
Dick's wages	144.00	3,300
Occasional help	94.00	2,100
Feed for stock	79.30	1,800
Pigs bought	12.00	270
Garden and other seeds	13.00	300
Lumber, nails, and sundries	14.50	330
Stakes and twine	7.00	160
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$709.80</b>	<b>\$16,860</b>

The credit side of the account was much better than last year, as shown in the table below.

The reader will not fail to bear in mind that in addition to these cash receipts towards the support of a family, we had not laid out a dollar for fruits or vegetables during the entire year. Having all of them in unstinting abundance, with a most noble cow, the cash outlay for the family was

very small; for no one knows, until he has all these things without paying for them in money, how very far they go towards making up the sum total of the cost of keeping a family of ten persons. In addition to this, we had a full six months' supply of pork on hand.

<b>Item</b>	<b>Actual Expenses</b>	<b>In 2008 Dollars</b>
From strawberries, 6 acres	\$857.60	20,000
From Lawton blackberries, 1 acre	159.84	3,600
From Lawton plants	213.50	4,900
From raspberries, 2 acres	38.72	880
From cabbages,	70.20	1,600
From garden	63.00	1,400
From peaches, 10 trees in garden	58.00	1,300
From potatoes	24.00	550
From pork	58.00	1,300
From calf	2.00	50
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,734.86</b>	<b>\$35,580</b>

The reader will also be struck with the enormous difference in favor of the second year. But on dissecting the two accounts he will see good reason for this difference. In the first place, some improvement was natural, as the result of my increase of knowledge—I was expected to be all the time growing wiser in my new calling. In the second place, some expenses incident to the initiatory year were lopped off; and third, three of my standard fruits had come into bearing. The increase of receipts was apparently sudden, but it was exactly what was to be expected. I used manure more freely, and on my acre of clover was particular to spread a good dressing of solid or liquid manure immediately after each mowing, so as to thus restore to it a full equivalent for the food taken away. This dressing was sometimes ashes, sometimes plaster, bone-phosphate, or liquid, and in the fall a

good topping from the barnyard. In return for this, the yield of clover was probably four times what it would have been had the lot been pastured and left unmanured. In fact, it became evident to me that the more manure I was able to apply on any crop, the more money I made. Hence, the soiling system\* was persevered in, and we had now become so accustomed to it that we considered it as no extra trouble.

The result of this year's operations was conclusive. My expenses for the farm had been \$709.80 [*\$16,000 in 2008*], while my receipts had been \$1,734.86 [*\$40,000*], leaving a surplus of \$1,025.06 [*\$23,000*] for the support of my family. But more than half of their support had been drawn from the products of the farm; and, at the year's end, when every account had been settled up, and every bill at the stores paid off, I found that of this \$1,025.06 I had \$567 [*\$13,000*] in cash on hand,—proving that it had required only \$458.06 [*\$10,000*] in money to keep us all with far more comfort than we had ever known in the city. Thus, after setting aside \$356.06 for the purchase of manure next year, there was a clear surplus of \$200 [*\$4,600*] for investment.

I had never done better than this in the city. There, the year's end never found me with accounts squared up and a clear cash balance on hand. Few occupations can be carried on in the city after so snug a fashion. Credit is the rule, and cash the exception—at least, it was ten years ago. But in the apparently humbler trade of truck farming and fruit growing everything is cash. Manure can be had on credit; but all you grow from it is cash. He who produces food will have no bad debts at the year's end except from his own carelessness or neglect. Thus, what a farmer earns, he keeps. His gains may be smaller, on paper, than those realized by dashing operators in the city, but they are infinitely more tangible; and if (as in my case) they are enough, what does the amount mat-

---

\* That is, harvesting feed by hand and carrying it to the live-stock, rather than letting them graze the pasture directly.

ter? A business which is notoriously profitable, kept on a cash basis, and consequently free from the risk of bad debts, cannot fail to enrich those who pursue it with proper intelligence and industry. I could name various men who, beginning on less than a hundred dollars, and on rented land, have in the end arrived at great wealth, solely from the business of raising fruit and truck farming.