

MISS TILLER'S
VEGETABLE GARDEN

AND

THE MONEY SHE MADE BY IT.

BY

ANNA WARNER,

AUTHOR OF "GARDENING BY MYSELF," ETC., ETC.

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EXPLANATIONS.

IF I say that one^r could often use more pocket-money than one has, many women will understand me; and if I go on, and declare that one has often much less than one needs, there are enough who will comprehend that too. Even if I say that such money is useful quite out of its proper channel, being as available for bread as for sugar-plums, there will be plenty of experience to endorse my own.

Where to find such money; how to make it in the prettiest, daintiest way; this I have tried to tell. Almost everybody in the country has a little ground to work with; almost everywhere there are neighbors who want more garden stuff than they can raise. And if the demand in the first place creates the

supply, the supply is yet more sure to increase the demand.

Then the business is all full of sweet influences, healing and strengthening for both body and mind. You will find your cares grow light, by the same work which makes your purse grow heavy. The very work itself, in the open air and sunshine, is a good not to be measured.

I need only add, that all the statements in this little book are matters of fact; neither over-colored nor over-drawn.

MARCH 18, 1873.

MISS TILLER'S VEGETABLE GARDEN.

CHAPTER I.

“SO you see, it's often pretty hard to make ends meet,” said I, with a sigh, to Mrs. Chose, my new lodger. —

Now Mrs. Chose was a woman who had seen better days, and worse days, and all sorts of days,—a woman with a perfect conjuror's bag of experience, from which she could always draw forth something just suited to the case in hand. To do her justice, too, she was not chary of her store. Therefore it was not without a certain undefined expectation of relief, that I looked up from my grey stocking, and said:

“You see it's often hard to make ends meet.”

We were sitting alone in the firelight, she and I, with Asa gone to bed, and Rose in the kitchen stirring up cakes for breakfast.

“If I were you,” said Mrs. Chose, briskly,

"I'd make ends meet, and have something for a bow-knot besides."

Now too well assured advice always savors slightly of reproof. I laid down my stocking, and sat up on the defensive.

"I don't see how you would," I said. "I've tried every way I can think of."

"Then I'd think of some more," said Mrs. Chose, knitting away. "Never did like Dick's hat-band—and never shall."

"What about Dick's hat-band?" said I, feeling slightly offended.

"Went half way round and tucked in," said Mrs. Chose, making her needles fly like the wheels of a locomotive.

I was silent at that. It was undeniably descriptive, but by no means to be mistaken for flattery. So we sat still in the winter hush, and the wood fire flickered and fell, and the wind sighed softly, and so did I.

"I can't make my household any smaller," I said at last, "if that's what you mean. These two young things have nobody in the world to look to but me."

"Of course that isn't what I mean," said Mrs. Chose. "It's a cowardly way out of a difficulty, to shirk it. Meet it first and conquer it afterwards."

"If I had a little capital, indeed!"—I began again.

"You've got plenty," said Mrs. Chose. "The trouble is, it's lying idle."

"There's nothing lies idle about *this* house," said I, bristling up.

"Well—ain't invested, then, if you like that better," said Mrs. Chose. "Don't pay interest."

"Nothing pays, now-a-days," said I, lugubriously. "Because there's nothing that can."

"Ah! there you are again," said my provoking lodger. "Just do me the favor to look out of the window, Miss Tiller, and imagine it's daylight."

"Front or back?" said I.

"Back," said Mrs. Chose. "There's nothing but the high road in front, and fortunes don't commonly come *that* way, except in novels."

I was ready to ask if they *commonly* came, any way, out of novels; however, I only shut up my eyes tight, and looked out of the back window, next morning, in imagination.

"Well," I said. "There's nothing but snow *there*."

"Suppose it was summer?" said Mrs. Chose, beginning to bind off her heel.

"Then there'd be an ugly stone wall," said I, "and a rough piece of ground inside of it. Part grassy, and part dusty or muddy, and all weedy."

"Exactly so," said Mrs. Chose. "If I were you, I'd never let that be seen again."

"Curtain the back windows?" suggested I. "Yes, it would be a great improvement, if we had the curtains."

"Dig 'em up!" said Mrs. Chose, with a little impatience now. "Dig up the weeds first, and burn 'em. Dig up the ground next, and plant it. Don't fetch a carrot out of your shawl like a juggler, but a shawl out of your carrots. Make a garden, raise vegetables, and sell 'em. You can dig what you've a mind to out of a bit of ground like that."

"Why, Mrs. Chose!" said I; for she quite took away my breath. "Do you mean *that*?"

"Mean it?" she said. "Haven't I done it."

"But I don't know how," I said, retreating a little.

"Study, practise, learn," said Mrs. Chose, finishing her gore, and proceeding to knit down the foot at a fearful rate. "That's the way I did."

"And I haven't got seeds, nor tools, nor men," I went on.

"Got spunk, haven't you?" said Mrs. Chose. "Now come," she added, laying down her work, and speaking seriously; "if you just set the candles right, you can always make six lions out of the shadow of one. Get your seeds, get your tools; lay out a little money that way at first, and more as you can spare it; and for men—why there's yourself and Rose, and the boy, Asa."

"The ground's poor," said I, musing.

"Make it rich," said Mrs. Chose. "There's muck enough down at the edge of the woods to stock a farm."

"Down in the low, swampy place by Mr. Fogy's?" said I. "But it's *there*."

"Have it here," said my unmanageable adviser. "I'll help. Fact is, I don't but half live without a garden of some sort, so if you'll hire me, I'll work for just high wages of pleasure!"

Pleasure, too!—the thing began to get hold of me.

"I declare, I'll try!" I said, brightening up. "What can we do in the winter besides drawing muck?"

Mrs. Chose laughed.

"There she goes," she said, "over head and ears already. I knew you were just made for it. Do? O, we'll study catalogues and choose our seeds, first of all. Just wait until to-morrow, and I'll find you in work."

CHAPTER II.

SO when the next evening came, and Rose and I sat down with leisure to think and talk, Mrs. Chose brought out a small army of catalogues.

"Some of 'em last year's," she said, coming in with her hands full, "but they'll answer your purpose about as well. Price of beans don't change much, and you won't make your fortune on novelties *this* year."

"What are novelties, pray?" said Rose, while I eyed the catalogues with a certain degree of mysterious veneration.

"New things that pretend to be better than the old," said Mrs. Chose. "Sometimes they are and sometimes they ain't. But except just a few for fun, it's generally safe to let other folks try 'em first. They're expensive, and risky."

"And are all these catalogues different?" said I.

"Different in spots," said Mrs. Chose. "You

see every body won't keep every thing,—save a world of trouble if they did, but they *won't*,—can't, I s'pose. And so one man takes to Caseknife and another to Dwarf Wax."

"Dwarf Wax!" I repeated, helplessly.

"Beans," said Mrs. Chose. "Just as nobody but Vick keeps Nutting's No. 1. And yet they *are* No. 1, every inch of them. But *they're* peas."

"And have I got to send to all these different men?" I said, turning over the bewildering pile of print and illustration.

"Only for some things," said Mrs. Chose. "Otherwise, choose one, and stick to him. Who have you been dealing with? Got something of a garden now, haven't you?"

"A little strip," I said. "O, we just go to the store for what we want."

"That's a nice way to have poor vegetables and few of 'em," said Mrs. Chose; "unless it's a deal better than most village stores. You get fresher seeds from the large dealers, and truer to name. And as most of them post-pay everything right to your hands, it's just as cheap."

"What is true to name?" inquired Rose, who, by the way, had come into the new plan with all her heart.

"True to name?" said Mrs. Chose;— "why

it's for 'Long Orange' to come up *that*, and not streaked. And for 'Early Blood' not to turn out 'Yellow Ovoid,' or a make-up between the two. Or 'White Tuscarora,' all speckled with 'Red Dent.'"

I thought Rose would have hurt herself laughing,—in fact we all took our turn.

"Where am I to begin?" I said, taking up one of the catalogues. "But dear Mrs. Chose, I don't even know some of these things by sight! 'Artichokes'?—never saw one in all my life!"

"If I may advise a little more," said Mrs. Chose, "having already advised so much, don't trouble yourself this year with what you don't know. Make out a list of simple things, that are, at most, only new varieties of old friends."

"I shall make bad work of the varieties," I said. "Now, Mrs. Chose, I'll tell you the thing, and you shall tell me the variety, and Rose shall write it down."

"What's your soil, first of all?" said Mrs. Chose.

"I don't know," I said, doubtfully. "Sandy something, Mr. Fogy calls it."

"Sandy loam," said Mrs. Chose. "Now, what's your neighborhood?"

"What *has* the neighborhood to do with our garden?" said Rose.

"Only to buy what comes out of it," said Mrs. Chose. "And so upon them depends, partly, what you put into it. Egg-plants never get into a shanty, and cabbages and onions are shy of going above stairs in a great house. Who are your customers?"

"There's an Irish settlement," I said, considering; "and two or three village inns. A few well-off people who have no gardens, and a few country people who don't raise anything. That's about the assortment."

"Very good," said Mrs. Chose. "Now we are ready for business. You may head your list with beans."

"But here are twenty kinds," said I.

"Half a dozen will do," said Mrs. Chose. "'Early Valentine,' for *very* early, and then plenty of 'Dwarf Wax.' They're about as good as peas, and don't care a snap for hot weather. Then for your poles, you want 'Concord'—nice for shelling green, and early,—'Concord' and 'Lima' and 'Small Lima.'"

"Why have any 'Small Lima'?" I queried.

"Because they're earlier, great bearers, and have a quite distinct excellence of their own," said Mrs. Chose. "Call 'em 'Sieva,' and that

'll take off the only objection. They'd sell six times as fast if the seedsmen would keep to that name. Then you must plant a good many 'Case Knife'; first-class, string or shelled, green or dry, as the catalogues say. Very long pods, very many of them; thick and crisp and tender; and the dry beans better for boiling than dry 'Limas.' Then 'Giant Wax.' Later than 'Dwarf Wax,' but as fine as can be."

"How many shall I say of each kind?" said Rose, looking up from her list.

"Mark out your bean patch, and see," said Mrs. Chose. "A pint of dwarf beans will plant a row fifty feet long, and a pint of pole beans will plant seventy-five hills."

"As to beets," she went on, taking up a catalogue in her turn (I doubt if she could have kept her fingers off another minute), "an ounce of *them* will plant fifty feet. You want 'Bassano,' and 'Early Blood Turnip,' and 'Long Blood,' if you *want* long ones."

"Here are yellow beets, too," I said.

"Good," said Mrs. Chose, "but yellow; which it don't seem right for a beet to be. All a notion, I suppose; but I do like to see things look like themselves. Carrots 'll give you yellow enough."

"O, I don't want any carrots," I said.

"Ever try the 'Early Short Horn?' " said Mrs. Chose.

"Never."

"Nor the 'White Vosges'?"

"Never even heard of it."

"Well, they're just two of the best things that grow," said Mrs. Close, "if they're only cooked right. I can clear a good bed of 'em myself."

"Is it worth while to bother with celery?" I questioned again.

"Worth while to *have* it," said Mrs. Chose.

"'Turner's Incomparable Dwarf.' Mr. Henderson says that's the best."

"Corn. We've got plenty, now," I said.

"No need to send for *that*."

"What kind?" said Mrs. Chose, with interest.

"I don't know," I said. "Field corn of some kind, I suppose; and I guess there's a little sweet corn. Does it make much difference? I thought corn was corn?"

"Reckon it is," said my adviser, dryly: "but some corn's cobs, and some corn's custard. That's about the difference. Send to Vick for his 'Early Minnesota;' first-rate, and nobody else has it; and to Gregory for the

'Mexican'; and then get 'Crosby,' or 'Trimble,' or any of the other sorts for change and succession. Mexican corn must have the very middle of the season; it's neither early nor late; but it's so good that you wish it was both."

"Shall we plant any cabbage?" said I. "We don't care much about it here."

"Plant cabbage!" echoed Mrs. Chose. "Why, it's well-nigh the backbone of a market-garden. You can't possibly plant too much. 'Early York,' and Vick's 'Wheeler's Imperial,' and Gregory's 'Cannon Ball'—almost as hard-headed as your friend Mr. Foggy—and 'Winnigstadt,' and 'Fottler's Drumhead,' and 'Drumhead Savoy.' 'Early Schweinfurth' is early and large and good, but rather soft; and 'Filderkraut' and 'Early Dwarf Ulm' are excellent for home use, but hardly showy enough for market. Then you want 'Red' for pickling. And put in just as many 'Marblehead Mammoth' as you can find room for."

"Mrs. Chose!" cried I. "If I hear another name to-night, I shall turn into a cabbage myself. I feel as if I were growing 'soft,' or 'solid,' or something, every minute."

Mrs. Chose laughed, and shut up her catalogue.

"Well," she said, "'There *ain't* no cause to bore ye 'cause you're tough.'

"'My lungs is sound, and our own v'ice delights
Our ears, but even kebbige-heads has rights!'

"We won't talk another word about it until to-morrow."

CHAPTER III.

"VERY good pickles," said Mrs. Chose, helping herself again (she always *would* have pickles for breakfast); "but not equal to the 'Improved Long Green.' *They'll* snap like a pipe-stem."

"Mrs. Chose," I said, while Rose jumped up, and ran for her catalogue, "I want a great many cucumbers."

"Can't have too many for me," said my gardening adviser.

"Shall we get some of those dear little early things, to begin with—and so have them all the season through?" said Rose.

"If you want to lose your time and your money, patience thrown in," said Mrs. Chose. "That's my experience. 'Dear little things' they've always been to me. I don't know whether it was my fault or theirs, but 'Early Russian' and 'Early Cluster' never did *me* a speck of good yet."

"But the catalogues say——" I began.

"O, well," broke in Mrs. Chose, "catalogues cover the whole country, and the whole country ain't just alike. And glass and gardeners make a difference, I s'pose, though I've never tried 'em mnch. 'White Spine,' and 'Improved Long Green,' and 'New Jersey Hybrid,' will be early enough, if you plant 'em right, and take care of 'em. And there's something of *them*."

"So it shall be, then," said Rose, noting the names. "We'll try them all, for fun."

"Yes, but you mustn't plant 'em all together," said Mrs. Chose, "or you may have to eat 'em together, too. Some things mix."

"They shall have the four corners of the garden," said Rose, laughing. "Now, Aunt Bethia—what's next?"

"Finish your breakfast, child," said Mrs. Chose. "*That's* next."

"O! I have," said Rose. "And I want our seeds just as soon as I can get them. We'll have cress, of course, and egg-plants."

"Curled," said Mrs. Chose, referring to the cress. "And 'Improved N. Y. Purple,' and 'Black Pekin,' and 'Green Japanese.' 'Early Long' is good, too, and 'Long White' are excellent, but they're not so large."

"But Rose," I said, "we don't want egg-

plant seed. You know we always buy our plants, ready to set out."

"Just as well raise 'em yourself, and have 'em plenty, and good, and cheap," said Mrs. Chose. "Start 'em in any warm room."

"What's 'Kohl Rabi'?" said I.

"Compound of cabbage and turnip," said Mrs. Chose. "Good and useful."

"Then comes lettuce,"

"There's a host of good early kinds," said Mrs. Chose. 'Tennis Ball,' and 'Early Egg,' and 'White Silesia,' and 'Simpson.' Then for hot weather, 'Malta Drumhead' is good, and 'Neapolitan,' and 'Asiatic,' and the 'Cos' varieties. 'All the Year Round' has a name, but I haven't tried it."

"Just look at the melons!" said Rose. "I didn't know there could be so many kinds."

"Every one to his taste about melons," said Mrs. Chose; "but I like 'Sill's Hybrid' and the old 'Persian.' 'White Japanese' is a fine new one, and 'Skillman's Netted' comes early."

"Four kinds," said Rose, writing them down.

"That's only musks," said Mrs. Chose. "For waters, there's nothing like the 'Orange,' to my fancy."

"They don't praise it much," I said, looking at the catalogue.

"No, they don't," said Mrs. Chose. "But I can't see why seedsmen should know everything—any more than the rest of the world. It's the best water-melon I ever saw. Not as big as it might be; but rich, and fruity, and handsome. And when frost comes, you can pick 'em off and store 'em in the house, and they'll keep till Christmas."

"'Okra' we don't know anything about," said Rose, reading the name next in order.

"Then learn," said Mrs. Chose. "Won't sell much in a country market, I guess; so you need only plant for ourselves. And if you want to *sell* water-melons, you must grow the old-fashioned big ones—'Mountain Sprout' or 'Ice-cream.'"

"What a name!" I said. "Is it like it at all?"

"About as like as it is to pumpkins," said Mrs. Chose. "Color favors it, of course. Put down plenty of onions, my dear. 'Long Yellow,' and 'Danvers' and 'White Portugal,' are all good keepers and croppers; and 'Silver Skin' is better to eat and to look at, and not quite so sure. Then I'd get a few quarts of onion sets, unless you saved some last year."

"Plenty of them in the house," I said. "And parsley we have in the graden. Parsnip seed we want."

"'Hollow Crown' and 'Early Round,'" said Mrs. Chose.

"Then peas."

"For market," said Mrs. Chose, pushing aside her plate, and giving herself to the seed business in earnest, "plant all the early peas you can get in. 'Nutting's No. 1,' 'Queen of the Dwarfs,' 'Little Gem,' are all excellent. And 'Tom Thumb' is good, and 'Carter's First Crop,' but they're not so large. 'Caractacus' is fine, they say, but never did quite so well with me. Then for second early, 'Epicurean,' and 'Premier,' and 'Eugenie,' and 'Princess Royal.' You'll have to study the prices, and then the height of the peas,—whether you can afford the money for dear ones, or the time to stick tall ones."

"But Mrs. Chose," I said, "aren't late peas good, too?"

"First-rate," said our lodger, reaching back to the stand for her knitting; "only they're not so sure a crop. Dry weather'll stint 'em, and damp weather'll mold 'em; or they'll get miffed at some other weather they don't happen to fancy; so it's generally safe (for profit)

to let peas slide on into beans. But I'd have some 'Veitch's Perfection,' and maybe 'Champion of England,' and you can plant 'Eugenie' almost all the season through.

"Peppers we've got," I said, reading on. "And pumpkin seed—plenty. Radishes?"

"'Red Turnip,'" said Mrs. Chose, firing up her needles. "'New French Breakfast,' 'Scarlet Olive-shaped,' 'Long White Naples,' for summer; 'Chinese' for winter."

"Salsify, we don't know either," said Rose.

"Very passable summer oysters," said Mrs. Chose. "And when you get spinach, my dear, let it be 'Round' and 'New Zealand.' The prickly's too prickly to live."

"Crooknecked Squash?" I queried.

"'Early Bush Crook' is very good," said our adviser. "'Cocoanut' is a grand little summer squash. Get 'Hubbard' for winter, and 'Turban' and 'Yokohama' for fall. 'American Turban'—not 'French.' What sort of tomatoes did you have last year?"

"I don't know," I said. "Just tomatoes."

"Two inches across?" said Mrs. Chose. "Wrinkled, watery, and fond of their skins?"

"The very kind!" said Rose, with a groan.

"We got the plants from Mr. Fogy."

"It's astonishing to me," said Mrs. Chose,

laying down her knitting, "*why* people take the worst when they can have the best. Now I've raised many Fiji tomatoes that weighed more than two pounds, and one that weighed more than two pounds and a half. Solid right through, and peel like a peach, without a bit of hot water."

"'Two pounds and a half!' 'Without hot water!'" cried Rose and I in different notes of admiration. And Rose immediately wrote down 'FIJI' in large capitals.

"Raised my own plants, too, without either glass or gardener," said Mrs. Chose. Nothing better for late than 'Fiji,' and for early, 'Crimson Cluster' is about the best I ever tried. It's a solid, fine flavored little tomato, the season through, and ripens very early, and bears well. Last year, I set out 'Crimson Cluster' and 'Boston Market' and 'Orange-field' and 'General Grant,' side by side, the same day. Plants all about the same size. And 'Crimson Cluster' was first ripe. Those are all you need send for. I've got seed of 'Pear' and 'Grape' for pickles and sweet-meats; and 'White Apple' for anything; and the Trophy seed they make such a fuss about. We'll give it a good trial."

"Turnips last," I said.

"A few early and a great many late," said Mrs. Chose. "'Strap-leaf Red-top' is good for either; and 'Golden Ball' and 'Orange Jelly' and 'White Globe' for late. 'Aberdeen' and 'Cow Horn' are good for market, and 'Long French' the nicest for home."

"But don't people who go to market want things for home?" said Rose.

"People who go to market," said Mrs. Chose, "sometimes leave their sense at home; and so they think first of filling their baskets, and don't care what they stick in if it only sticks out. Large, cheap, good—that's the market order of excellence for country customers. So all the little good things we plant, we must count to eat ourselves."

CHAPTER IV.

"I WISH the seeds were here!" I said, about twenty-four hours after the list had gone. "I want to set to work."

"Then set to work," said Mrs. Chose. "There's enough to do."

"But I mean in my garden."

"Sooner you get your muck drawn, the sooner you'll be ready to dig," said Mrs. Chose, casting on stitches with marvellous celerity. "Sooner you get your boxes ready, the sooner you'll be ready to sow."

"Boxes?" questioned I.

"Yes," said Mrs. Chose. "Seed-boxes, seed-pots, seed-pans."

"We've got a good many old rusty milk pans about the house," said Rose, innocently. "They could just as well hold the seeds as not. I suppose the rust wouldn't get through the papers, if they were kept dry."

"Bless the child!" said Mrs. Chose, with an amused face. "What simpletons folks are

about what they don't understand! How many milk pans do you think it'll take to hold your seeds in that shape? I mean earthen seed-pans, to plant 'em in. Tin pans ain't good for much, in my experience. Use everything else you've got, first."

"We've got several butter tubs and such things," said I.

"Flour barrels, too, haven't you?" said Mrs. Chose, dryly. "You don't want anything a bit deeper than four inches, and two's deep enough. Tomatoes ain't orange trees, nor oleanders. What's the shallowest thing you've got, except a tea-saucer?"

"A few flower pots," suggested Rose.

"They'll do for some things, said Mrs. Chose. "Got any old soap boxes, or boxes of any kind?"

"Plenty."

"That's it," said Mrs. Chose. "Cut 'em in two, or in three, or in four; any how, so they won't be more than four inches; board up the bottom and leave the top, and *that's* done. Then amuse yourself making labels."

"Has everything got to be labelled?" I asked, in some dismay.

"How do you mean to tell 'Early' from 'Late,' 'Dwarf Ulm' from 'Improved Drum-

head,' 'Little Pixie' from 'Cannon Ball,' 'Long Purple' from 'Black Pekin,' or 'Tennis Ball from 'White Silesia'?" said Mrs. Chose, laying down her knitting,

What answer *could* we give but silence?

"Don't you want to know what you're eating?" pursued our lodger. "Don't you like to give things a foot, that want it, and save your ground over plants that'll make six inches do?"

Again silence—only Rose laughed uncontrollably. Our counsellor laughed too.

"It's good sense for all," she said, "whether it sounds like it or not. By the time you've got boxes and labels and muck all ready, I'll warrant we'll find something else to do."

"The ground's too frozen, and the muck as well," I said.

"All the better for hauling," said Mrs. Chose. "The frost ain't deeper than a pickaxe. My dear, in gardening, if you wait until everything's just right, *something* will be sure to be just wrong."

That, at least, was sense that I could understand, and forthwith I marched off to the kitchen, and despatched Asa that very night to engage a team.

"But I suppose you'll allow, Mrs. Chose,"

said I, as I came back to the sitting-room. "I suppose even you will allow that I can do nothing *to-night*."

"No such thing," said our indefatigable lodger. "There's always something to do, 'Map out your garden, make your plan, straighten out your ideas.'"

There was no doubt my ideas needed it; but whether "mapping out" (a thing I never did in my life) would do the business, was, at least, an open question. However, I got pencil and paper and set to work, drawing first (by advice) a plan of last year's small attempt at a garden, and then "straightening" my ideas to a parallel with the lines and divisions of the new garden that was to be.

"Keep all your vegetables playing puss in the corner," remarked Mrs. Chose, with more decision than clearness. "Never plant 'em two years in a place. Let beans follow corn, and corn potatoes, and peas come after beets, carrots, and parsnips."

It was pretty work. Happily I knew the exact size of our garden lot, and had no need to wait until next day for measurements, so we planned and replanned, and arranged and changed, and studied and considered, until we were tired.

"Give all the early things a warm spot," said Mrs. Chose. "Put your tomatoes well in the sun, and egg plants and melons in the hottest place you've got. Never plant late peas in a dry strip—melons 'll make more of it, and put the beans where they'll have plenty of air. Peas go in first of all, so get *that* ground ready first. Then potatoes and tap roots."

"We haven't got enough potatoes to plant," said Rose.

"Get some of your namesakes, then," said Mrs. Chose. "'Early Rose' is one of the best kinds for home or market that I know. Not quite equal, not better, anyway, than 'Early Fluke,' but bigger, and that goes far. 'Early Goodrich,' is fine, too, and 'White Peach Blow' is first-class late."

"Let's try 'em all," said Rose, laughing, as she wrote down the names.

"What puzzles me," said Mrs. Chose, is how in the world you've kept a garden and grown no experience! What did you sow? Where did you get your plants?"

"Why we just sowed what we happened to have, or what the store happened to have," said Rose, in some disgust. "And bought plants of Mr. Fogy."

"What *he* happened to have, I s'pose," said our lodger. "I know what they were. All the Fogys like the kinds that were stored up in the ark, if they can get 'em. Yellow field corn, and watery potatoes, and peas like small shot."

"We'll give him some new ideas," said Rose.

"No you won't," said Mrs. Chose, "because he won't take 'em. It's the only thing he *won't* take if he can get it free, except good counsel."

"You've known him before, then?" said I.

"Not this branch," said Mrs. Chose. "There's some of the family everywhere, in my experience. They're about equal to sorrel for creeping along under ground and striking root. Now, Miss Tiller, folks who mean to see their muck drawn in the morning, must go to bed overnight. That's the second letter in the gardener's alphabet."

"What's the first?" inquired I.

"The first is that you must see it drawn," said Mrs. Chose, rolling up her knitting. "The master's eye is about as important as if he had but one, like Polyphemus."

CHAPTER V.

MRS. CHOSE was right. A little surface hard work soon opened a way for us into the rich muck bed, and then load after load came slowly up the hill, and was dumped in a great heap that could be worked over before spreading—for this Mrs. Chose advised.

"If you have time," she added. "Now if it was clayey muck, then it ought to be drawn in the fall, and frozen and worked and mellowed all winter; but this is pretty clear vegetable stuff, and don't need so much."

Nobody can tell how pleasant it was to see that heap grow—there was little chance that "the master's eye" would fail to watch it. Rose and I looked out of the window, when we could do no more, and every now and then ran down to the edge of the woods and surveyed the digging process.

"Goin' to fetch the old swamp up to the house, hey?" said Mr. Fogy, who also came

to look on. "Better let it stay where it belongs. *I* always thought it was good t' hev it so fur away. Give ye all the shakes—see if it don't."

"Shakes of laughter," said Mrs. Chose, "to see how our beans grow. *Jack's* bean wasn't a circumstance."

"His only went to the moon," said Rose, with her twinkling eyes, "and ours are going to our pockets!"

"Wish ye joy—wish ye joy!" said Mr. Fogy, softly patting the small stock in hand which his own pocket always contained. "Beans, hey? Where are *they* goin', if I may be so bold?"

"Down on that sandy spot that never bore anything *but* sand before," I said.

Mr. Fogy whistled gently and walked away.

Yes, we were to put the muck, first of all, on the dryest, poorest places. For I could not draw enough to cover the whole garden this year.

"I must save part of my team money for ploughing," I told Mrs. Chose.

She nodded her head approvingly.

"Forehanded," she said. "You'll do. Muck for the dryest, and manure for the wettest;

and either or both of 'em everywhere else, as far as your stock will go."

How busy we were those days; how happily we worked; how pretty our seed boxes looked with their smooth filling of earth and neat labels! I suppose other people would have laughed, but *we* thought the house in a great state of decoration; with boxes in every room where there was heat, and by every window where there was sunshine. Mrs. Chose took tomatoes up into her room for special petting, and cabbages were duly installed in the kitchen, and everything was watched and admired with a warmth of interest that might almost have supplied the lack of stove heat. It was all such pretty work. To fill the boxes in the first place, mixing some very rotten manure with the earth, putting the rough siftings at the bottom of the box, and the fine crumbly mold on top; then making the little drills, and opening the mysterious papers, and sewing "in hope." Then patting down the earth again, and watering with careful hands; summarily poking down little seeds that jumped out again during this process; what fascination it all was. Then with the first days of relenting frost and unlocking sunshine, we set to work out of doors.

"Mark off a strip for early peas," said Mrs. Chose, "and get them in first of all. Then come early potatoes, then all your parsnips, and part of your beets and carrots; then more peas, and so on."

"Why *part* of the beets and carrots?" I said.

"Main crop does best planted later," said Mrs. Chose. "You just want a good patch for early. But parsnips and salsify like the whole season. And onions,—onion sets may go in as soon as there's a place for 'em, and onion seed the same."

It was a week of great things, that third week in March; and when the afternoon of the twentieth came, I took the packet of "Carter's first Crop" in my hand, and went forth to plant.

"Do you s'pose they'll ever come up, Miss Tiller?" said Asa, rather ruefully, as he looked into the four-inch-deep drills he had marked out for my peas.

"Come up? Of course they will," I said, with more outward than inward assurance.

The drills did look very deep—and the little white peas at the bottom so very small.

"Why, people who know, Asa," I began again, "say that four inches is just the right

depth. Then, you see, the roots are out of reach of the hot sun and the dry weather."

"I guess they be," said Asa, significantly. "Ain't much as 'll get to 'em, I guess."

But I covered my peas with heroic exactness, quite to the top of the deep drill, and would not admit any doubts and questions, though a few were certainly scattered along the lines in spite of all I could do.

"Now, Asa," I said, "you may go and prepare the ground for my beets and parsnips."

"Dig it a good two spades deep," said Mrs. Chose, who had come up. "And break every single clod there, until there isn't a lump bigger than a lima bean; or you'll have nothing but parsnip forks all winter."

I had a good laugh over Asa's mystified face, as he moved off to execute orders, but thought it was best not to disturb the impression.

"Aunt Bethia!" cried Rose, running out of the kitchen door, "here's John Ready come for lettuce."

"Come for lettuce!" I repeated.

"Yes," said Rose, "His mother's heard you've got a wonderful garden, and sends her compliments, and she's longing for something green."

"Longing for something green!" I said again. "So am I; but the lettuce is only just up, child. There isn't salad for a rabbit in the whole box."

"Grows fast," said Mrs. Chose. "Just send word she shall have the very first that is large enough to send. Never refuse a customer, my dear. If you turn 'em off once, maybe they won't come twice. And *next* year, if we live, you must have early lettuce planted in the fall."

CHAPTER VI.

"SEE here," said Mrs. Chose, displaying a plump little blank-book with yellow covers, and then laying it on the table right under my nose. "That's for you."

"Is it?" I said, turning over the book with thoughts as blank as its pages.

"Yes," said Mrs. Chose. "Don't you wish you knew what to do with it?"

"Current expenses?" I suggested.

"Currant expenses and raspberry profits," said Mrs. Chose with a laugh. "That's your garden book, Miss Tiller, and every bit of it's got to go in. What you plant and how it grows; what you get and what it costs; what you sell and who buys it. The old game of 'how, when, and where,' on new principles."

"O how delightful!" cried Rose. "Aunt Bethia, may I keep the accounts?"

"Of course you may," said I, "if Mrs. Chose will tell you how."

"Not much telling needed," said our lodger,

with a sharp pull at a refractory skein of yarn she was winding. "Only keep the buying, and selling, and sowing, and reaping in separate parts of the book, so they won't get mixed up. Because, 'Planted Little Gem to Mrs. Smith for five dollars,' won't help you much at the end of the season."

"How then, Mrs. Chose?" said we laughing.

"Planted such a day," said our lodger; "In blossom, such a day; 'Ripe,' when. Sold so many beets such a day, to such a person, for such a price. Paid or unpaid. This tomato ripe first, this potato up first, this corn eaten by the crows, these beans spoiled by the long July drought."

"That sounds encouraging," said Rose.

"Must happen sometimes," Mrs. Chose replied, and must go down when it happens. Note *everything*, mistakes and all. Bad weather, bad customers, experiments, results. Then next year has the benefit of all this year's experience."

"It's a capital plan," I said. "But what do you mean by bad customers? I thought people paid when they took the things. I am sure we always do."

"Well," said Mrs. Chose, with a smile,

"slippery folks can slide 'most anywhere. "They'll order a dozen cabbages, and just before yours get there they'll buy of a pedlar—a cent a head less. Or they'll tell your boy that tomatoes have fallen; and he being young and unwary, lets 'em go for ten cents short."

"But I'd *make* 'em take what they ordered," said Rose; "and make 'em pay, too."

"Send fifty cents to look up the ten," said Mrs. Chose. "You'd get enough of that game in once playing. And you can't scold and call names as a man would do, because you're a woman. It's one of the small taxes you have to pay for that distinction. And a woman must be *herself* at all risks. Then some folks'll say you sent scant measure, and some'll keep things 'until next time,' or until their husbands get home. And neither one nor the other ever turns up, so far as you are concerned."

"Mrs. Chose, I begin to feel all discouraged!" said I, in dismay. "Are there many such people?"

"There's a few sprinkled here and there in most neighborhoods," said Mrs. Chose, cheerfully, as she released her yarn from its last tangle; "but they needn't discourage you, my dear. Make a note of 'em, and don't trust

'em again—they're not the whole world. You must weed your customers as you do your garden."

"Is that *all* we'll have to contend with?" asked Rose.

"Not quite," answered our lodger. "If you're careless, the cows will get in—they like early peas—and if you don't watch the crows, *they'll* eat more of your corn than you will. Then there are cut-worms, and cabbage worms, and tobacco worms——"

"But we haven't tobacco," interrupted I.

"Tomatoes will serve their turn," said Mrs. Chose. "And egg-plants. Then sometimes—but I never minded that so much—the Lord will send frost, or dry weather, and spoil half your crop of something."

"Why don't you mind that so much, Mrs. Chose?" said I.

"Because it comes so straight from the Lord's hand, I guess," said Mrs. Chose. "Of course the others do, too, in a way, but it seems easier to see when there's nothing between."

And at that, as they say in the "Pilgrim's Progress," we were somewhat in a muse.

"Is *that* what you think of when things go wrong in your garden?" said Rose, softly.

"Yes, when it *is* that and not my carelessness," said Mrs. Chose. "I couldn't keep a garden on any other terms. I should fret myself to death in no time. But if He sends hot weather to ripen all the wheat in the country, I've no right to complain because it scorches me a little—or my late peas."

Rose laughed, and cried a little, too, and my own eyes got rather misty; but we neither of us spoke.

"A garden's a sweet thing if you can take it easy," Mrs. Chose went on, after a pause. "With the sixty-fifth Psalm in your heart, it seems almost as if everything in your hands prospered. *Then* one works with good courage. And, by the way, my dear, have you attended to the onions?"

"Attended to them?" I said, bringing back my thoughts. "I planted the seed, you know, and they're coming up finely."

"Just in time, then," said Mrs. Chose. "If you don't look after them well for a few days, there's a particular kind of a little worm that'll eat 'em all up, so you won't know there have been any onions there."

"Eat 'em up!" cried Rose.

"Yes," said our lodger; "I lost whole beds so, and couldn't seem to help it. Then I tried

an experiment of my own, and never lost any more. Easy as possible. Just put a little barn-yard manure in a pail of water over night, and put *that* upon the onions once or twice, and the worms 'll quit for parts unknown; or stay there, to begin with. You ought to see to that this very day."

I went to give orders; but, first of all, Rose and I sat down and read the sixty-fifth Psalm together.

CHAPTER VII.

IT was but a little of the "mash" that we could, as Mr. Foggy said, bring to the top of the hill, and but a part of our ground that could be covered this spring with the precious material. Teams cost too much to be largely indulged in, and some ploughing *must* be done. Yet our muck heap was a great success. The dry sandy places, where, as Mrs. Chose told us, barn-yard manure would "burn" the soil, had a dressing of the cooler and more binding fertilizer; and on the other ground we put what else we could get of well-decayed stuff, from the barn, or the chip-yard, or the woods. Asa took up the matter so heartily, that he was constantly making early and late excursions with his barrow, in search of something to help my seeds grow.

"Miss Tiller," he said to me one day when our third planting of peas was just going in, "please let me try an experiment."

"Tell me about it first," I stipulated.

"Well, ma'am," said Asa, "a man told me once, that if you'd put stuff from the hen-house in the drills, and plant the peas right a-top, they'd grow like smoke."

"O well, you may try," I said, laughing, "but in only a few rows, Asa; we musn't risk our whole planting on an experiment."

I may say here that the experiment was tried, and thus far results are uncertain. The peas are up, and in Asa's rows have come less evenly than in the others, with a blank space here and there, and the rows generally not so thick; while, at the same time, they are stronger and taller, and of a deeper green than the rest. You would think there were two distinct kinds in the patch.

"Look here, Aunt Bethia," said Rose, one early May morning, coming in with a basket of fresh pulled radishes. "*Aren't* they pretty!"

"Why yes, very," I answered, looking admiringly at the fresh red and green in the basket. "But what are you thinking of, Rose? We can't eat half of these for breakfast, and they're better pulled fresh for tea!"

"Ah!" said Rose, in high glee. "What am I thinking of, to be sure! These are for

Mrs. Smith's breakfast, Aunt Bethia, and she wants to know the price."

"I'm sure I don't know, Rose. What she likes to give, I suppose."

"My dear Miss Tiller," remonstrated Mrs. Chose, "that's not business. Set your own price on your own wares."

"But I don't know what price to set!"

"Just ask the butcher," said Mrs. Chose. "He's at the gate this minute."

Rose darted out and came back out of breath.

"Two cents a bunch, or three cents if they are very fine, he says, Aunt Bethia. That's what they are at the village."

"Three cents here," said Mrs. Chose. "Fresh things always command the highest price going. Put five in a bunch, my dear, and where there's a small one put two, and tie 'em up nicely, spreading 'em out so as to show."

"But they're only going across the way to Mrs. Smith's," I said.

"Makes no odds," said Mrs. Chose. "Always put everything in exact market order, and make 'em look as pretty as you can. Leave out every one that ain't perfect, and always throw in one or two rather than to

even come near short measure. Let business be business, but still do it with a large hand."

Anything happier than Rose, as she bunched up her fresh radishes, could hardly be found.

The next morning opened less pleasantly.

"Miss Tiller! Miss Tiller!" called Asa, under my window, before I was well awake. "The old cow's been and gone and got into the garden!"

"Oh, Asa!" I cried, "how did she get in?"

"Reckon she'd been all day huntin' up a weak spot in the fence, Miss Tiller, and then when night came, she knew just where to go."

"Asa," said I, very soberly, "there musn't be any weak spots in the fence."

"No'm," said Asa. "Reckon best not."

"Asa!" called Rose, "has she done any mischief?"

"Can't just see yet'm," said Asa. "She have tramped round consid'able; and took her breakfast off the peas."

Before I could more than begin to get dressed, Rose slipped into her garments and ran hastily down to the garden.

"It's the 'Queen of the Dwarfs,' Aunt Bethia!" she said, returning in breathless

haste and fairly pale with excitement. "She's just walked along the rows and cropped off the buds!" And Rose was all ready to cry.

I felt almost as bad myself when I went down to look at the damage, and saw the poor peas, standing yesterday in such even ranks of flourishing green shoots, and now nipped, and shorn, and cut down.

"This is the *per contra* side," said Mrs. Chose, who had followed us out. "Must always be profit *and* loss, my dear. But they'll shoot up again, and come in for late. Not so good as at first. That can't be expected."

We stood silent and sad, as the poets have it. Then came a loud rap at the front door. Rose ran to answer it, and came back out of breath again, but this time with pleasure, and a basket in her hand.

"O Aunt Bethia!" she cried, "Mrs. Smith sends word the radishes were so good she wants some spinach!"

"Natural chain of events," said Mrs. Chose. "How much?"

"A peck or a half peck," said Rose lucidly.

"But I don't believe there's a peck in the whole patch," said I; "it hasn't grown fast this dry weather."

"Just ready to thin out," said Mrs. Chose. "Not a peck? Yes there is, and more too. Take out three pecks and not miss 'em. Come, get your knives, and I'll help."

She showed us how to cut where it was thickest, leaving other plants to fill up the vacant space, and our peck measure was full before I could have thought it possible.

"Peas and beans you heap up," said Mrs. Chose, "while, on the other hand, turnip-greens and spinach you press down. Not hard, you know, but lightly, leaving the measure about even full. There, that's enough."

Rose turned the pretty tufts of green into Mrs. Smith's basket, and ran off with it, coming back more radiant than before.

"She'll pay for the spinach to-morrow, Aunt Bethia, when she knows how much. And look, here's for the radishes!"

And Rose opened her little hand and poured into mine a whole five-cent piece, and a ten, and three coppers.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE peck of spinach brought twenty-five cents. Rose manufactured a money-box out of a little thread and needle concern, and declared herself ready for all that might come. Then Mrs. Chose went away for a fortnight's visit, and we were left to our own devices. It was a bad time to be left—so we thought—for it was the early part of May, that border line between frost and summer, which one or the other is perpetually breaking through. We doubted and questioned and hesitated, went out to plant some things, then feared, and ended by planting others. The days were often days of perplexity, and by night we looked out at the clear, cool moonshine that silvered the garden, and wondered if its brightness came in any measure from a frost. But feeling your way is a pretty sure means of learning the road, and in that fortnight we gained much experience.

We had put in some "Newington Won-

ders," in April; and now, as they cautiously broke through the soil and peeped out, we watched them, commending their caution. Then we found that they cared very little for a little frost. Doubtfully, and after much debate, we set out a few tomatoes for *very* early, two or three "Chihuahuas" and "Excelsiors," with a "Trophy" and "Crimson Cluster," choosing to save part of our stock of each kind for more settled weather, and wanting to see which kind could best brave the early season, and come out victorious.

Slowly, and by degrees, the pole beans went in, too; and young cabbage went out; and my seed basket began to grow lighter, and the garden to grow full.

Then three heads of lettuce were called for, at three cents apiece, making a variety. But we soon found that our customers were to be of many sorts, indeed.

"Just look!" said Rose, showing me a fine shoot of her "Early" namesakes, which lay prostrate, and seemingly snapped off at the root. "Pussy must have done that, Aunt Bethia; isn't it a pity!"

"'Tain't the cat's work, Miss Rose," said Asa, stopping his hoe. "That was a grub, and I paid him off, too."

"What's a grub?" said Rose.

"Here's another, I guess," said Asa, "down by this bean." And digging vigorously with his finger close at the side of the poor bean, Asa soon unearthed a large brown grub, or cut-worm—long, fat, and ugly. We learned to know them well before summer was over.

Then, the weather turning dry, little mischievous beetles, called "fleas" or "thrips"—minute black specks of evil—covered our early turnips, and the cabbage plants and radishes, and whatever else seemed handy and tender. A sprinkling of soot or ashes while the dew was on proved a partial cure and protection, and as the thrips cared little for the rough leaves, their day was soon past. Not so the cut-worms, always ready for a young shoot of almost any description; cabbage after cabbage disappeared, and corn, and beans, and peas, and potatoes all yielded an occasional tribute. One row of tomatoes was replanted over and over again, as if there had been a family of cut-worms in that particular spot; though indeed our new ground seemed full of them everywhere, from the small, dark brown youngster, not half an inch long, and able only to manage one leaf at a time, to the full-sized paler villain, who could

level the stoutest shoot in the garden. Nothing for these but careful hand-picking every morning; searching out the grub by every cropped leaf or stem, and despatching him then and there. Wood-ashes put round the plant did a little good, but was not reliable; and morning after morning we all turned out to hunt cut-worms for a while, before the sun was up, finding that the best time. Later in the day the worms go deeper down into the earth, and are not so surely found.

"And *then*," as Rose said impressively, when we were telling Mrs. Chose of our fortnight's work, "*then* came the cabbage worms!"

"Ah!" Mrs. Chose replied, toeing off her stocking. "So *they've* come to set up business here, have they?"

"You'd think so," said I. "I do believe there's one on every cabbage."

"When there ain't six," said Mrs. Chose, assentingly.

"But what are we to do?" I said. "We did 'nt have many cabbages last year, to be sure, but we hadn't one of these creatures."

"Nobody had, over here, *until* last year, if that's any comfort," said Mrs. Chose. "They're one of the importations from Eu-

rope that might have staid home. *I* always stand to it we could grow our own caterpillars, if it *is* a new country. However, that's neither here nor there, the things being here. Do? O you must pick 'em off, and not let 'em get on again. Put it out of their power."

"But there are so many!" said Rose.

"There'll be more if you don't," said Mrs. Chose. "One generation of cabbage worms takes about a fortnight to get itself up."

"How would ashes do for them?" I questioned.

"Care no more for it than the fireplace," said Mrs. Chose. "And they like whale-oil soapsuds as if they'd come from Greenland. Folks say lime-water's good. I don't know. Killing 'em's best; little ones, big ones, butterflies and all. Meek lookin' things the butterflies are; most as white as skim milk,—nobody'd ever guess what they're up to."

"I wish you'd come right out and show us one, Mrs. Chose," said I. "And I want advice about some other things, too. Is it time to put out my egg-plants?"

"No hurry for a while yet," said Mrs. Chose. "They won't do much until they can have June weather. If they get too large in

the box, just pot them off. Growing some tall lettuce here, eh?"

"It ran up so in the box," I said.

"Things that run up want setting down," said Mrs. Chose. "Put *everything* down to the seed leaves, at least, and lettuce and cabbage will bear to go further. Why the wind'll shake the life out of 'em, stuck up at that rate!"

And Mrs. Chose caught up a trowel, and began skilfully to reset the little plants which Asa had just—as she scornfully remarked—"stuck in to see if they'd hold!"

CHAPTER IX.

AND so, with all sorts of weather, and in spite of all sorts of enemies, our garden prospered. The spring was a dry one in all its latter half; May gave us one long rain, and then turned fair and steady, and warm as June; and still our thirsty little plants held up their heads bravely. We took advantage of every slight dash of rain, of every cool, cloudy day, and set out our cabbage plants with good success; and gave our sweet corn a start in a bowl of scalding water before we ventured it in the hot ground. A few misadventures came,—grubs were busy and cabbage worms persistent; a mouse in the post-office emptied my paper of "cheese-pumpkin" seeds (all but four); and our "extra early" beets were almost a total failure, because Asa hoed them in a hot, sunny day, while the ground was very dry.

Then came the first of June, with a soft

sprinkling shower; and when I walked round my garden next day, the summer had come.

There were the pretty green rows of spinach, all the fuller for the thinning of their ranks; there were our "Early Rose" potatoes, pushing up their little pink flower-buds; most of all, there were the "Carter's First Crop" peas, all ready to be picked! Full, sound, and hard were the short pods—short, I suppose, because of the dry weather, but thick-set and abundant. Squashes were up in full vigor; young onions growing apace; and parsnips, and salsify, and carrots waved in flourishing rows of green.

"Thou blessest the springing thereof," I thought, as I passed from point to point; agreeing thoroughly with Mrs. Chose, that a garden on such terms was a very sweet thing, and that I wanted it on none other.

"I wonder what peas are now?" I said meditatively, not knowing that Mrs. Chose had followed me out, and was at my elbow.

"Sixty cents," answered that good lady promptly.

"Sixty cents?" I repeated.

"A peck;" said Mrs. Chose. "I happened to hear to-day. You see, it's early for 'em."

"By the way," said I, "how shall I ever

know what to charge—days when you *don't* happen to hear, Mrs. Chose?"

"Didn't I tell you to ask the butcher?" she answered briskly, "That's the best you can do, most days. Not quite fair, either, because yours are just fresh picked, while *his* are yesterday's leavings from the town market. It's a wonder to me that none of the papers take the trouble to publish prices at least once a week."

"Retail prices," said I. "Yes, I wish they would. The *Tribune* did, one summer, but *then* I didn't want to know."

"My dear," said Mrs. Chose, looking sharply around, "you must make Asa pull out every one of those little weeds with his fingers—in there among the onions. The hoe can't reach 'em. Or if it did, it would worry the onions,"

"Won't they bear that?" said I, smiling.

"Don't like it," said Mrs. Chose. "And they'll let you know as much. Keep 'em clean but keep 'em quiet. Hoe your 'Limas' and 'Black Wax,' if you must hoe. They'll bear a little earthing up, too—like to have the soft warm soil tucked round their stems. How did you plant these?" said our lodger, pausing suddenly before the patch of early potatoes. "They're in stripes."

"How 'in stripes'?" said I, willing to test her acuteness.

"O, I can see," returned Mrs. Chose. "Just a few things here and there. One stripe's pale green, and the next is dark; and the pale ones are ready to blossom out—and the dark ones ain't. It's stripe and stripe clear down the patch."

"Well," I said, "we tried an experiment. The pale ones are 'Early Rose,' and the dark ones are 'Early Mohawk;' and we planted them the same day, just to see which would be earliest."

"Planted the whole patch the same day?" asked Mrs. Chose.

"No, only the first two stripes—the ground was not all ready. Then the week after, we planted the next two, and the week after, all the rest. And the 'Early Rose' came up a little bit the soonest, and have kept just a little bit ahead ever since."

"Very good," said Mrs. Chose, approvingly. "Better than if you'd planted the whole at once. Then it might have been something in the weather or time, that didn't agree with one of 'em; but now you've given 'em three chances. We'll see which ripens first, and has the most big potatoes. Egg-plants out yet?"

"No," I said, "I've been waiting for rain, so as to give 'em a good start."

"Ground's pretty dry yet," said Mrs. Chose, sticking her finger down into it; "guess you'd better wait a little longer. They're fidgety things."

"I wish I had potted them off, as I did the tomatoes," said I. "Just look at those; they were turned out of the pots in the very midst of the dry weather, and never seemed to know it. See what a size they are already!"

"It's a grand way," said Mrs. Chose. "Worth the trouble with every plant you can find time for. How's the celery doing?"

"Didn't come up well," I said.

"Planted too deep," suggested Mrs. Chose. "Might have been the dry weather. I'd plant again, in a box; where you can take care of it, and hurry it up. That lettuce wants pricking out, right off. What are the profits this week, my dear?"

"Spinach and radishes and lettuce," I said.

"Not much—about a dollar, I think."

"Must be a beginning," said Mrs. Chose. "People are getting tired of spinach now, and want something new. 'Carter's First Crop' will go off like wild-fire."

And so it proved. The news having spread

among the neighbors that we had green peas fit to pick (a thing unheard of before in Milltown on the second of June), Mrs. Smith at once sent a requisition for a half peck; and Mrs. Flint declared herself ready to take all we had; while (greatest triumph of all!) Mr. Fogy was surprised one morning by Asa, in the early twilight, peering over into our garden, to see whether they were honest, genuine peas or no!

CHAPTER X.

ROSE TILLER'S JOURNAL.

JUNE 20th.—Aunt Bethia has been so busy this week, that I have had to keep all the accounts—her own as well as mine. My accounts, indeed, are chiefly in the line of cents, and five cents, and twenty-five,—in fact, all varieties of soiled money! It's easy to count, for there isn't much of it yet; but I'm to keep all that secret, and only tell Aunt Bethia at the end of the month.

Of *course* our "Bassano" beets are a failure: what could be expected, when Asa hoed them right in the midst of the dry weather, and in the middle of a hot day. The later beets are doing nicely, and Aunt Bethia sent for more "Bassano's," and we planted them three days ago. Cabbages are growing finely, and if the grubs were an extinct race we should soon have a grand display. Grubs! grubs! I almost dream of them. But the

cabbage worms are greatly on the decline—thanks to our constant hand-picking.

We have had such splendid rains! All through May, it was very dry, and things hung their heads, and so did we ours—just a little bit. Mr. Fogy shook his, and said we were going to have last summer over again, only worse; and that he felt for people who expected to make anything by their gardens—meaning us.

Aunt Bethia looked rather grave for a minute, I thought, but Mrs. Chose laughed and said she felt for people who *didn't* expect to; and she pitied Mr. Fogy, and condoled with him over blasted peas and stunted corn, and worm-eaten cabbages, and bored squashes, until he was glad to go home and feel ashamed of himself in private. For you must know, dear Journal, that none of these disasters have as yet come to pass. The weather has been dry—that is all; and now we have had lovely showers, one after the other, and finished off with a whole day's rain. People say that the last Sunday in May heralded seven rainy Sundays; in which case we shan't be dry again for some time. I don't know about that, I'm sure; but I know how everything grows now; bush

beans covering the ground, and "Limas" making great efforts to get to the top of the poles without any exertion. For they keep tumbling down ridiculously, and don't take to them at all kindly, like the "Concords" and "Purple Pods," and other well-behaved beans.

Water melons haven't come up well either—too dry, maybe; so we've planted them again. And we keep on sowing cabbage seeds, a few at a time, so as always to have plants for spare places.

Aunt Bethia told me if I wrote in her journal book, I must be very exact and methodical; and here I am running wild like any pumpkin vine. Now, to begin:

Pumpkins and squashes look well; and Asa waters them with whale-oil soap-suds, and manure-water, and dusts them with ashes, to keep off bugs and borers. Successful so far.

Our patch of "Carter's First Crop," did not yield, I think, a whole bushel of peas. But then it was a small planting, in very dry ground, and with very dry weather. And even that, at sixty cents a peck, was something. "Queen of the Dwarfs," the next planted, isn't ready yet—plenty of pods, but not filled out—thanks to the old cow!

From the third set, "Nutting's No. 1," we have picked near a bushel already, and the vines are full yet. It would have been a great yield, as Mrs. Chose calls it, if Asa's experiment had been tried on all the patch. In every row where the hen manure was put, the vines were strong and green (though they did not come up so even), and the pods were larger by far than the rest. The other rows came up very thick, set little pods, and after that exertion proceeded to dry up. We have picked very few peas from *them*.

In another part of the garden, "Little Gems" were fit to pick just five weeks from the day they were planted. "Quick work," Mrs. Chose says.

We have cleared the ground of the Carters," and planted it with some of that funny "Squaw Corn," which they say comes from Nebraska and the Indians. All the corn looks well; and among the "Dent Corn," put in for the chickens, Asa has planted a few Southern "Cow Peas"—to see what they will come to in this northern latitude.

At first the "Early Rose" potatoes seemed to get ahead of the "Mohawks," but now they are both in blossom, side by side, with no seeming difference except in color. *They*

won't bear much more hoeing. Mr. Henderson says it's a shame to have a weed large enough to be seen, in a market-garden, so I'm afraid we ought to be a little ashamed of ours; but the fact is we do all we can; and since the rain, plants and weeds are having a race. There hasn't been a drop too much, Mrs. Chose says; and last night, when Aunt Bethia stood looking out at the garden, I heard her say softly:

"O Lord, how good Thou art!" So I suppose there never is *really* a drop too much—or too little!

CHAPTER XI.

"**T**HERE!" said Mrs. Chose, as she came in at our summons to breakfast, "I've had a morning's work of it!"

To judge by appearances, so she had; with hair all moist and disordered, and gloves wet, and dress that, despite its looping, showed a good eight inches of gathered dew.

"I reckon the weeds think so too," she went on, coolly slipping off her dress skirt and hanging it up in the back stoop, to drip at its leisure. "I've hoed out every one of your beans!"

"Pole beans?" I inquired.

"Pole beans," said Mrs. Chose. "Hoed 'em out, and thinned 'em out, and trained 'em up."

"I'm sure you're very kind," I said doubtfully, thinking of my next words; "but did the beans need thinning, Mrs. Chose? I thought they were looking so beautifully thick."

"Beautifully thick now, is beautifully thin

by and by," said Mrs. Chose, pulling off her gloves. "It's whether you'll have more vines and fewer beans, or more beans and fewer vines. Three or four plants to a pole will take all the ground. And need it."

"How foolish of me not to know that before!" I said. "I do believe I put six beans round every one."

"None too many," said Mrs. Chose. "Some don't come up, and some get cut down. I killed a half dozen grubs there this morning, and you'll want to replant two or three hills. They'll come late, and supplement the others."

"When the others begin to go off a little, as Miss Marjoribanks says," remarked Rose, coming in from the garden in her turn. "Aunt Bethia, I can't conceive how you can bear to stay in, such a morning."

I could not bear to, but I only said: "If I went for the radishes, unpractical child! who then would make biscuits?"

"True, ma'am," assented Rose. "But just *look* at the radishes, Aunt Bethia! did you ever see such beauties?"

"New French Breakfast," said Mrs. Chose, with a look that passed smilingly between the flushed warm cheeks of Rose and the cool

scarlet radishes with their white tips. "And as good as they're pretty."

So they proved. When the two garden people came down from their ablutions to the discussion of breakfast, the "New French" were found perfect to eat, and "perfect to look at too," Rose declared.

"What's the programme for to-day?" Mrs. Chose inquired.

"Half a bushel of peas to pick," said Rose.

"And another planting of sweet corn to put in," said I.

"Peas all planted?" inquired Mrs. Chose.

"Yes, the last 'Champion of England' went in a week ago."

"All in good time," said our lodger. "Late peas are an unsatisfactory temptation, that's all you can say. But that last planting of corn, my dear, wants help. 'Mexican' always *does* come up a little yellow, but I think a teacupful of wood ashes around each hill would hurry up the green very much. If ever you have more wood ashes—and time—than you know what to do with," continued Mrs. Chose, biting her 'New French Breakfast' with a lingering, meditative air, "you can't do better than to dig a hole for every hill of corn, fill it with ashes, just hide 'em with

earth, and plant your corn. It'll pay, if you can make the investment."

"We've planted most of our corn in drills this year," said I.

"Best way, perhaps, for a market garden," said Mrs. Chose, "though I haven't *quite* satisfied myself yet whether it yields as well in all soils. Let's plant the next set half and half, and give the thing a trial. And if ever you plant peas again in light soil like this, plant 'em in double rows, six inches apart, and then two or three feet between the doubles. I'm satisfied you get more off the same piece of ground, and they seem to shade each other, and don't dry up so fast."

"You'll have to give Asa another lesson in hoeing, Aunt Bethia," said Rose. "There he was plunging into the late beets just as he did into the early."

"He should take his fingers right in among the plants," said Mrs. Chose, "and then hold his hoe high, and just scratch the ground deep enough between the rows to kill the weeds. A little rake's the best thing. Scratch 'em up before they're there, and you'll have no trouble."

How nice it is to have one's own radishes for breakfast! although, as Mrs. Chose re-

marked, it was to be hoped that opinion would not spread.

And were there ever such peas as we had for dinner? "Little Gems," truly. Not a bit sweeter than the "Nuttings No. 1," which we feasted on two weeks ago, but so large and so fine. Worth paying for, I thought then, and other people thought so too; for demands for peas came in faster than the pods could fill themselves out to proper dimensions. Half a bushel, a peck, half a peck, a peck and a half, so ran the orders, and though one peck dropped to fifty cents, the next came up to the former sixty. Rose shook her money-box at me, but further knowledge I had none, as yet.

CHAPTER XII.

YES, we do still want rain very much. Cabbages and corn don't seem to mind it, and beans care little—only they are slow in coming to perfection; but for other things this dry weather is a trial. Even potatoes hang their heads, here and there, and beets stand waiting. It's a time of patience, for them and for me.

"But what says the Apostle James?" quoth Mrs. Chose to me, as she turned from the window this morning, where she had been studying the clouds. And the clouds had all drifted by, and the sky was beaming out clear and bright as ever, and the garden must settle itself for another day of waiting. Waiting with a smile on its face, too, which is just a wee bit the harder.

"What says the Apostle James, my dear?" I looked out the words, and have been thinking of them ever since.

"Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the

precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and the latter rain.' "

Well, we don't have to wait quite empty-handed, that's one thing. We had young "Early Horn" carrots to-day for dinner, and they are just as good as Mrs. Chose said. "Precious fruits of the earth" all these things are, sure enough. My garden basket this morning was a picture. First, a great layer of the plump "Queen of the Dwarf" peas, almost as large (the peas) as old fashioned marbles, Mrs. Chose declares; and on them the little bright colored carrots, with crimson radishes and crisp lettuce. I don't think we need to complain, if it is dry weather.

Meantime there can be little planting done. No use to set out celery now, unless we had more hands to water it every night; and cabbage plants, too, must bide their time. And I don't quite like to trust my last planting of corn—"Stowell's Evergreen"—until the earth is moist; but I suppose it won't do to wait. Mr. Henderson says the first week in July is as late as you can plant and be sure of a crop. So we just keep down the weeds, and stir the earth, that not a drop of the precious dew, or of the *very* light showers we have, may be lost.

This morning early, when I was out surveying and ordering, behold Mr. Fogy came up to the fence and surveyed, too.

"Mornin', Miss Tiller," he said. "Pokin' round amongst things, as usual? Needn't to think they like it, 'cause they *don't*."

"They like having the ground stirred, Mr. Fogy," said I, "if that's what you mean."

"Let's the hot air right in to the roots," said Mr. Fogy.

"But the dew goes too," I said; "and these light rains."

"Light enough, ain't they?" said Mr. Fogy, dolefully. "Don't seem as though we should get half a crop o' nothin'. I don't find any need to help dry up things."

"I'm helping the other way," I said, laughing. "Just you try it once, Mr. Fogy."

"Guess I will!" said our queer neighbor. "What ye doin' with all them lines? Hangin' up your clothes here, and turning the garden to account that way?"

"No indeed!" said I, briskly. "Those lines are to keep the crows off, Mr. Fogy. They're only round the corn."

Mr. Fogy softly whistled Yankee Doodle, beating time on the fence.

"You reckon they'll care for a lot of pack-

thread?" he said. "How's your tomatuses? lookin' pretty spry?"

"Very," I answered; "and with fair-sized fruit on them already." Whereat Mr. Fogy whistled a variation.

"Put 'em in pots, didn't ye?" he said.

"Yes, the early ones. Then when there came a shower I turned them right out, keeping the ball of earth whole, and they've never hung their heads for a minute."

"New ways, new ways," said Mr. Fogy, with slight scorn. "Play gardenin'."

"'Play gardening' that saves work," I answered him. "It pays well, Mr. Fogy, to have your plants begin to grow the minute they're set out."

"Maybe so," he said; "I've no time for notions myself. A man that has to make his livin' has to be practical." And Mr. Fogy jingled an accompaniment in his comfortable pocket.

Now wasn't that too bad? But I met it well, and stopped his mouth with a bunch of radishes.

"Look here, Mr. Fogy," I said, handing him the pretty things, so clean, and sound, and solid that the earth scarcely hung even to their white tips; "you take these home to

breakfast, and don't talk any more about my 'play gardening.' These are the 'New French Breakfast.'"

"Best French things ever came under my notice!" said Mr. Fogy, so much admiration fairly wrung from him.

"Much beholden to ye, Miss Tiller. Our radishes have taken to worms, lately, so they're no 'count. Can't think how they get in neither, the ground's hard enough."

"Why, that's just the trouble!" cried I, displaying (as one likes to do) my newly acquired knowledge. "Radishes want to have the ground made and kept perfectly fine and soft, Mr. Fogy. And they should have new ground, if possible; and if you can't do that, then put a top-dressing of fresh new soil and Mr. Vick says that'll insure a good crop."

"Tut, tut," said Mr. Fogy. "Beg your pardon, Miss Tiller, but I'm rather too old a bird for salt-sprinklin'. Who's Mr. Vick? Him that's moved into the red house down by the post-office? Ha'n't heerd of any other new comer. Well, good mornin' to ye, any way, and obligations." And Mr. Fogy strode down the hill with his radishes, mentally shaking his head at Mr. Vick and me.

"My dear," said Mrs. Chose to me after

breakfast, "if I were you I'd get my celery ground all ready, so that the plants could be set out at a minute's notice. Make the earth very rich and fine, keep your plants well weeded, and then wait for the rain."

CHAPTER XIII.

I SUPPOSE all gardeners have their uninteresting times,—days when there is little to do, and weeks when nothing seems done, as well as turns of weather when few things thrive.

"In short," as Rose remarked, "there *are* minutes when one would like a gardener better than a garden!"

The mornings were drenched with dew or close with heat, or both; the midday sun not endurable on any slight account; and yet, when, from one cause or another, I stayed in for a few days, things were sure to suffer. And then, when I did get out at last, for just a quiet stroll after tea, so much claimed my attention that the walk was rather one of fatigue than rest.

"In fact," (to quote Rose again), "you never ought to go out in the evening, unless you have already been out half the day."

"All true," I assented. "Only look at that

corn! it has just jumped from the silk to the ear, and the crows have begun upon it already."

"I'll settle that before I go to bed," said Rose, running back into the house for her ball of twine.

"Nothing for it, my dear, but to watch every single thing, every single day," said Mrs. Chose. "From Asa to grubs."

"But I can't!" said I.

"Then the crows can," said Mrs. Chose, knitting on as she walked."

"Why there's a cauliflower gone!" I cried, springing down that way. "And another! three, four —"

"Rabbits," said my companion, coolly. "Vegetation's getting rather dry in the woods."

"Do you mean that I've got to fight *rabbits*, too, Mrs. Chose?" I said in despair, bending over my cropped cauliflowers.

"Shoot 'em if you like," she answered; "trap 'em if you can. Surest way is to bewilder the cauliflowers."

"If you can do it as easy as you can me," I said, standing up and looking at her. But Mrs. Chose only laughed.

"They can't bear the smell of blood," she

said. "Just soak a bit of fresh killed meat in a pail of water, and put *that* on your plants. Rabbits will return to dry vegetation as fast as they can go."

So there was a new branch of work! However, it was one that—after the first lesson—I could leave in Asa's hands; and as it was quite successful, we had no right to complain.

With this little exception, our garden duties at this time were in a very regular and uneventful routine. Fighting the weeds always (either before they came up or after); nipping off the tops of bean vines that had climbed their poles; pinching in cucumbers and melons; tying up tomato vines as they grew, and setting out late cabbages in every nook and corner,—all these took their turn. Then there were late cucumbers to sow for pickles, and radish pods to pick for the same; for Mrs. Chose would not let us lose or waste the least little thing. I should say, that in setting out young plants now in the dry hot weather, we first laid them—root and all—in a pan of water, and planted them right out of that.

A good many things we learned to know in this time of comparative quiet, besides the footsteps of rabbits. How to blanch our "Cos" lettuce; for instance, waiting till it

was quite dry, and then gathering up each head of leaves neatly by itself, and binding it round with a string of bast mat. And as but few heads could be done at a time (for tying up seemed to make them run to seed all the faster) it became a regular part of our afternoon work, when Rose and I went out for a breath of fresh air, just before or just after tea.

Then there were sweet herbs to gather, as they came into flower, one by one; or rather as the buds began just to appear. Some we sold green,—not much; and the rest we carefully dried in the shade, and bunched up, ready for any winter demand there might be. And every day there were nasturtiums to gather, and young cucumbers to pick; and one morning we planted a whole bed of onion seed, sowing it thick, for pickles.

"Waste *nothing*," said our adviser. "Keep every inch of ground full all the time of anything but weeds. And if you get a barrel full of pickles more than you want, trade 'em off to somebody who's got four or five dollars more than *he* wants."

"A barrel of pickles," I said. "But wouldn't the vinegar to make 'em cost all they would fetch?"

"Don't want any vinegar," said Mrs. Chose.

"Pack 'em down in salt, with a stone on top. Salt's cheap, and so's the stone."

"Well, if the ground is to be kept full," I said, "what shall go in here, after the early corn and peas?"

"Turnips," said Mrs. Chose. "Spinach, kale, lettuce, radish. And wherever you can edge in a hill of corn sideways, the old cow'll get three more stalks for winter."

"She'll have a great heap of pea vines and bean vines," said Rose.

"And if you'll throw all the refuse together in some corner," said Mrs. Chose,—*"all that is good for neither pigs nor people—and keep adding in sod trimmings and soap-suds, and everything else you can think of, there'll be a great heap there in the Spring. Richest stuff that can be too."*

"Mrs. Chose," said I, "do you know I just can't *bear* such places round the house."

"What sort of places?" said Mrs. Chose, with twinkling eyes. "The place *I* mean, is turned over once a week, and has a good covering of clean earth between whiles."

"Ah!" I said. "That alters the case. But you wouldn't put bones there too?"

"Put bones in a barrel," said Mrs. Chose, "mixed with wood ashes and sprinkled with

water. They'll crumble down in time and make very near the best heap of all. The more riches you put into the ground, the more riches you'll get out of it." And Mrs. Chose routed out a broad expanse of purslane that had ensconced itself in a corner, and remarked that she would carry *that* plant to the chickens.

CHAPTER XIV.

MR. FOGY was greatly exercised that we did not plant out our celery until July. Indeed, all our proceedings made him restless; and he asked, and looked on, and made comments, and criticised, until Rose at least grew restless. Cold water on the plants was well enough, she allowed, but we did not want it on us. However, we busied ourselves so deeply in our work that it did not matter much, after all.

I think I did not put down, in its place, just how we managed our celery, so I may as well do it here. We planted a little—sowed it, I mean—for very early, in a box in the house. But then the main crop was started out of doors. I guess Asa won't soon forget how I made him prepare the ground—a rich piece, that lay partly in the shade. Such covering with very rotten manure; such digging, breaking every lump of earth with the spade; such raking, to finish off. Then we made

very shallow drills, six or eight inches apart, and sowed the little seeds, and patted them softly down with the spade, not having any roller. The weather turned dry, and so we gave the celery bed a good, quiet sprinkling every night from the finest rose of our watering-pot; and the seeds came up well. *Then* I had to keep watch of Asa all the time he was weeding them, to make him use the slow process of finger and thumb, instead of ploughing through with his hoe. Once well up and weeded, the plants took care of themselves, until they were large enough to prick out. Mrs. Chose says some people think it isn't needful to do this, but we did it; taking up the young plants carefully from their thick rows and setting them out about four inches apart, in a freshly dug bed, rich, and all in the shade this time. Now, in July, we have done the final planting.

I must confess, when Mrs. Chose told me that Mr. Henderson and the other best authorities practise *flat* culture, digging no trenches at all, I felt a little incredulous, and doubtful of the result. So we compromised matters, she and I, and planted the celery half and half.

The ground was partly where we had

grown early cabbages, and partly where we had grown early peas. The first had already been well enough manured, but to the last we gave a good dressing of rich, decayed stuff, digging it well in. Then we dug our trenches four feet apart and a foot wide, and a foot and a half deep, filling them then half full of very rich rotten manure and earth, well mixed together. Then we set out our plants about six or eight inches apart, down in the trenches, and had no further trouble, because we chose our time, and got them all out just before a rain. Mr. Fogy planted his by the day of the month, and has had no end of work in shading and watering. In the flat patch, as Rose calls it, the plants were merely set out in straight lines three feet apart. Each plant had every broken leaf and straggling root cut off, and was set down to its full depth, and the earth packed close about it; and though the rain gave the plants a great start; still, as it had been rather dry since that, we have given a good dose or two of Monday's soapsuds, or the dairy water of other days. And now, as Mr. Fogy says, we shall see.

"Only, whatever you do or don't do, my dear," said Mrs. Chose, as we stood surveying the beds, "never earth up your celery when

it's even damp, else you'll eat rust all winter. And don't earth 'em up at all yet, let 'em grow awhile. Keep down the weeds and stir the soil, and when the weather turns cool and moist it's time enough to earth up."

But we haven't come to that yet.

CHAPTER XV.

"AREN'T things queer?" said Rose, on the last night of July, as we sat in the old porch, with the evening air and the honeysuckles and the humming-bird moths.

"Any new thing taken the old tack?" inquired Mrs. Chose.

"Why here was Mrs. Smith wanting a peck of string beans every day," answered Rose, turning her money-box over and over; "and behold, when I sent them to-day, she *didn't* want them."

"Can't expect folks to change their minds about everything else and be stationary on beans," said Mrs. Chose, plying her needles in the twilight. "Pickle 'em."

"Then Miss Dick," said Rose, "who's been after beans and peas, and spinach, and corn, and whatever we had of any sort—*she* won't want any thing more at all, I guess; for the

Browns have gone off on a journey, and left her their garden while they're away."

"Hold on to potatoes, and such things as can wait," said Mrs. Chose. "Put up all you can for yourself; dry the corn, salt down the cucumbers, sell what won't keep for what you can get, and have patience."

Rose shook her little box again, slowly and thoughtfully, but said nothing.

"I suppose I do need patience," she confessed at last. "I did so want August to do more than July."

"How much has July done?" said Mrs. Chose.

Rose laughed, curled herself down, and bent her head so as to catch the last faint gleam from the west, and opening her little book, read as follows:

Three bushels peas.....	\$8.40
One bushel string-beans.....	2.00
Sweet-corn	2.50
Two bushels potatoes.....	3.00
One bushel tomatoes.....	2.00
Cabbages	2.00
Beets... ..	.10
Total.....	\$20.00

"Here it is!" she said gleefully, with a

flourish of her money-box, as if it had been the "bones." "Where's your purse, Aunt Bethia? I want to clear it all out, and get ready for August."

Twenty dollars! I suppose Mr. Foggy would not have counted it large interest; and yet it was, for it had grown out of nothing. I bestowed it in my purse thankfully, thinking that the Lord had been very good to us, and the little seeds had done their work well. And there were one or two vacant spots which that sum would just fill.

"Very fair," Mrs. Chose said, nodding her head approvingly. "For you are only beginners yet, and the dry weather's been a hindrance. But there's always *something*, in gardening as well as the rest. Now how much ground have you ready for turnips?"

"There's an old patch of pea-vines may come up," I said. "I guess that'll hold all the seed I've got."

"Ay, but you must send for more," said Mrs. Chose. "Put turnips in every square yard you've got. 'Strap-leaf,' and 'White Globe,' and 'Cow Horn,' and 'Aberdeen.' Any others you like. Clear the ground as fast as you can; save the pea-vines for the old cow in winter, and the dry peas for your-

selves—better than any split peas you can buy; dig the ground, rake it smooth, sow your seed fourteen inches or so apart—I mean the drills—and just when you see the clouds coming. Spinach don't want to go in until September."

"Save the dry peas?" I said. "I never heard of doing that, unless for seed."

"Aren't always good for seed," said Mrs. Chose, "but first-rate to boil. And in a market-garden you must turn *every thing* to account, some way."

Our "Early Minnesota" corn was splendid, —good size, sugary, and tender. And the "Princess Royal" peas were—as Mrs. Chose declared—like the end of one's little finger boiled up! Dry weather killed some of the potato vines, but we dug those first, and the pole beans hung full of their green pods, with "Concords" already fit for shelling, and "Limas" and "Sievas" in a great state of preparation. "Crimson Cluster" tomatoes were first ripe, and "Chihuahuas," and "Trophy," and "Excelsior" amused themselves growing larger. So came on the first of August, with sweet rains and exquisite weather, and the good hand of the Lord about us in every way.

CHAPTER XVI.

IT is funny to see how suspicious people are of new things! So cautious as they are even about our delicious wax beans, afraid to try them at first, concluding that because they are yellow they must, of course, be dead-ripe. They are finding favor now, though, wherever the people have eaten enough to find out that the yellow means richness—not ripeness. It is just the same way with our "Green Japanese" egg plants. Now *we* think they are about the nicest we have, not even excepting the famous "Black Pekin;" but nobody dare buy them. Mrs. Smith sends them back with the word that they're not ripe, and Mr. Fogy—having heard the joke—goes about town laughing at market-gardeners who don't know when their stock is fit for market. You see we raised our own plants this year, and so bought none of him. But, as Rose says, he is quite welcome to his streaky purple eggs, of the oldest possible

variety and toughest possible skin; and it makes little difference to us, any way, what people think of ours, for this neighborhood has not quite grown up to egg plants.

"They've reached the tomato age, my dear," says Mrs. Chose, "and perhaps egg plants will come next."

Corn goes off faster than it comes on—that is, we have orders for dozens of ears ahead.

The "Early Minnesota" is all past now, and we are in the midst of "Moore's New Concord." Now *this* is a splendid market corn, because it's so very large and handsome. It is excellent, too, in sweetness and tenderness, so that one may sell it with a clear conscience. And yet I am not sure that there is a bit more real weight of grain on one of these big ears than on an ear of the little "Minnesota;" the "Moore's Concord," kernels are so small, and the cob so very large in proportion. But it sells, as I said, faster than it grows.

So do our cabbages, because they are so fresh, and hard, and tender. At first the village was more disposed to buy of the traveling hucksters than of us—their cabbages looked bigger; but a single trial of ours brought about a change. One German

woman sent her child to waylay Asa and buy a solitary cabbage, and then forthwith followed him up and took all he had, and began to slice them down into sauerkraut without a minute's delay. And so a single taste of our sweet corn put the larger field ears "nowhere."

We are very busy clearing the ground (wherever it can be cleared) for turnips, putting in the seed as we go, first one patch and then another. Early peas, and corn, and potatoes are fast giving way, and early beans will soon follow. We can spare them now, with so many "Limas" and "Concords" for shelling; and "Limas" bring forty or fifty cents the half-peck. Peas keep up to sixty cents the peck, and I dare say they ought to be more, but it's so hard to find out. None of the market-men or grocers will tell one the retail price, and their wholesale leaves such an immense margin for profits, that we are in as much of a puzzle as ever. And none of the papers that I see give the retail prices, except once in a while. I wonder what is really the fair difference between the whole-sale and retail? How much a peck? How much a basket? I wish some honest person would tell, for I'm always afraid of over-

charging in the first place, and then of not asking enough.

Four things go off as fast as we can raise them—four, besides the corn: peas, and beans, and tomatoes, and cabbages. These last are from six to fifteen cents a head, according to size: tomatoes are eighty cents a peck, and so are white onions. Squashes don't sell much. Then we have queer little demands for red peppers, and okra, and carrots—just enough to take all that we don't want ourselves. Beets go pretty fairly at six to eight cents a bunch; potatoes vary.

It's not quite all fair sailing. One woman ordered a peck of tomatoes and three cabbages; and when Asa took them yesterday afternoon, behold she had supplied herself from a huckster in the morning! Another kept the things, but beat him down as to price. I told Asa that must not happen again. Mrs. Chose says it's no use.

"If you begin to back down, Miss Tiller," said she, last night, as she cleared the tangles mysteriously fast from a skein of yarn, "if you begin to back down, you may keep it up until you get to the wall. And there ain't much to be done there. Have a fair price, and stick to it."

CHAPTER XVII.

"ONE learns a great many things in market-gardening," said Mrs. Chose, meditatively, and gazing upon the dish of plump, ruddy tomatoes that graced the breakfast table.

"A great many," I assented. "But what in particular, Mrs. Chose?"

"Appearances ain't worth a button," said Mrs. Chose; "and hasty judgments still less."

"So the one lesson rather knocks the other in the head," said Rose, laughing,

"Rather," said our lodger, with a smile, as she helped herself to a tomato.

"Now there's those 'Trophies.'"

"They're no trophies for us, certainly," I said.

"No," said Mrs. Chose. "Hard to peel, and just miss being hard to eat. Not very early, not very large. Not exactly poor, perhaps, but don't come anywhere near being

rich. That's our experience. I've tried 'em and tried 'em; breakfast, dinner, and tea."

"*This* isn't a hasty judgment, then?" I said.

"Yes, it is," said Mrs. Chose. "We've planted 'em in one soil and season. And here and there you'll find a great gardener say just what we do. But it stands to reason, m'dear: just look how the seed has been raised, and how it's puffed, and how it sells. Mr. Henderson wouldn't cry up any thing that was all looks. Maybe they haven't got going yet."

"I don't think even the looks are so very much here," said Rose. "Why our 'Excelsiors' are twice as handsome! Not a crease nor a wrinkle, and so solid, and as easy to peel as a peach. But Mrs. Smith likes the 'Trophies,' Aunt Bethia; and those great 'Chihuahuas' that we never eat. She says *those* are what she calls tomatoes."

"Because they weigh a pound and a half apiece," said Mrs. Chose. "That's it; always get the worth of your money when you go to market."

"Then if the Fijis were only early they'd carry all before them," said I, "for they are as good as they are large."

"They're beginning to ripen fast now," said

Rose, "Asa brought two in to-day. And oh! Aunt Bethia, do you know—it's too funny! but I don't think Asa likes to go round with things!"

"Wants things to come round to him?" said Mrs. Chose. "They don't do that, commonly, in my experience."

"He don't mind it when they're ordered," said Rose, "but I don't think he likes asking people to buy."

"Needn't ask 'em," said Mrs. Chose, "just give 'em a chance."

"He says they're always finding fault," said Rose. "The cabbages are too small, or the tomatoes aren't ripe, or the beans aren't filled out."

"Let 'em," said Mrs. Chose, seizing her stocking as the last piece of the tomato disappeared; "that's their share of the fun, saying things are wrong."

"What's our share?" said I, laughing.

"Knowing they're right," said Mrs. Chose. "When every thing in the basket is picked, and sorted, and sound to the core, words slide off. What's the price of 'Limas,' now?"

"Eighty cents a peck," said Rose. "Tomatoes have gone down to sixty. Why, Mrs. Chose, Aunt Bethia won't even put in a to-

mato that's a little too dead-ripe, for fear it'll spoil on the way."

"I know," said Mrs. Chose; "didn't I see her sorting the beans this morning, culling out the half-filled pods?"

"We have to see to all that," I said. "I couldn't be sure of Asa."

"Just what I used to do," said our lodger. "Pray over your baskets as well as your seeds, for there's a temptation at the bottom of every one."

"A temptation!" repeated Rose.

"What's the odds if some ain't filled out?" said Mrs. Chose. "They'll slip in among the rest. And a bruised tomato or so in a peck can't signify. People must—and nobody does—" and Mrs. Chose knit on with almost the energy of Mme. De Farge herself.

"And you can't tell the honest pennies from the rest, when you come home," said Rose, shaking her head sagely. "Well, all mine—I mean ours—are honest, that's one comfort. Aunt Bethia, our little green turnip rows are the prettiest things in the world, if only they could get some rain."

Yes—if! And as the bright morning passed into noonday, behold little white ranks of vapor, and across them small gray flecks, speed-

ing up from the east. Then a gray sky, then—actually!—a soft-falling Scotch mist. Rose called it a fine rain!

"I mean to take the good of every drop," she said, "just as the turnips do."

The mist fell and ceased; began again; came harder, with a sound upon the trees that could be heard. Held up again—pattered down in one or two gentle showers that uncurled the weary leaves and lifted the drooping stalks. Finally, began once more, with steady, gentle persistence, and rained all night.

"I think the cabbages have grown already, ma'am," said Asa to me, as I stood at the open window next morning. And there was no doubt about the turnips.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THAT was Wednesday. And Thursday night came another little shower; and Saturday morning—

"Just look!" said Rose.

"Yes, look," Mrs. Chose repeated, as the raindrops came hurrying down with their pattering feet, and the spouts poured forth small torrents, and the water gathered on the walk in broad shining pools, "Some time since you saw it last, ain't it?"

Rose drew a breath that was half a sigh, but further answer made none.

"Turnips can't get too much, child," said our lodger. "And it's what the beans have been crying their eyes out for, this month past."

"But the thing is," broke forth Rose, "that Saturday is our special market day! And I had talked Asa up to doing his best; and we had filled so many baskets, and there they

stand!" concluded Rose, in a voice nearly as damp as the weather.

"Very good place for 'em to stand," said Mrs. Chose, eyeing the distant baskets, where green corn and cabbages were taking the rain in most primitive fashion.

"And Mrs. Saul *ordered* a whole peck of 'Lima' beans!" Rose went on.

"Wise woman," said Mrs. Chose. "Next month she'll want turnips, I shouldn't wonder."

"Whatever have you filled so many baskets with, Rose?" said I.

"One peck 'Lima' beans, ordered," said Rose; "one half bushel potatoes, ditto. Then one bushel 'Limas,' twenty-four ears 'Mexican corn; one peck tomatoes, and sundry cabbages. Do you think it will clear, Aunt Bethia?"

"I shouldn't like to have *my* dinner depend on the question, Rose; but I dare say it may hold up now and then."

"And then Asa can go between showers," said Rose. "O! here he is now. Well, Asa, what about the weather?"

"Pourin'," said Asa, "and holdin' up." But I've a notion to start right off, anyhow, Miss Tiller. 'Ta'n't no wetter carryin' of 'em

round than it were a puttin' of 'em in the ground, as I see. Got any small change, ma'am, just to set me up in business?"

"O I have," said Rose, running for her box, and turning down a small rain of cents, and two-cents, and five-cents, on Asa's outstretched hand. "Ninety altogether, Asa; will that do?"

"Reckon it will," said Asa. "Guess I'll make it. You'd think there wasn't a soul in town that ever kept any thing less than a dollar!"

And Asa buttoned up his coat, slung the bag of cabbages over his shoulder, took a basket in one hand, and a basket and our old umbrella in the other, and set forth.

"He's a good boy!" said Rose, straining her eyes to watch him as far as possible. "And I shall go straight off and make a pudding for dinner."

Which two unconnected ideas had really in Rose's mind, this time, a very intimate connection.

"Pourin' and holdin' up." Asa could not have described the day more exactly. Only that, as Rose remarked, "it poured a good deal more than it held up." Asa had taken such an unusually large venture this time, that

we felt more than usually anxious; and the question of the weather, and how it might possibly affect the market, formed a sort of background to all the morning's work. Only Mrs. Chose sat unmoved at her knitting, and smiled at our doubts and fears, as one who had been through all that, and come out.

"Will be so at first," she said. "Then you learn to strike an average, and find out that ups and downs ain't much in the long run."

"The rain might keep other sellers away," said Rose. "That's one thing."

"And it mightn't," said Mrs. Chose. "That's another."

"But just see how it comes down," said Rose.

"Mayn't make a pin's difference, either way," said our lodger. "Most boys and men ain't all sugar, and there's but few of 'em that are clear salt."

"There comes Asa," cried Rose, clapping her hands, "'way off at the foot of the street. Swinging his baskets, too, so they're empty. No! Yes! Well, all but one."

And Asa, a very damp specimen of a boy who was *not* salt or sugar, presently entered the gate and tramped round to the kitchen-door. Even Mrs. Chose came out to hear.

"'Limas' went off like hot cakes," was Asa's opening remark. "There was two people wanted a peck, and I hadn't but a half to give 'em. And corn! I took two dozen ears, and I could ha' sold four dozen. You should see 'em, Miss Tiller, stretchin' their necks over the 'Mexican!' Cabbages did pretty well; got ten cents for some. But there wasn't no market at all for tomatuses. Some folks has 'em in their gardens, and some was supplied. And there's your money, ma'am; four dollars and seventy cents; and ninety cents o' that's your change; and there's a peck and a half o' beans not paid for, and some o' the cabbages—women hadn't nothin' smaller'n ten dollars. But my! how they does like your corn, now they've got a taste of it! 'Got any corn?' 'Got any corn?' So they come runnin' out. And it ain't best never to let nothin' spoil," said Asa, in conclusion, "but just take it round and see. Miss Rose was right."

I think Rose must have been rather *too* anxious over the weather; for her eyes glistened and her head drooped a little, as she took the full handful of money and went away.

"Thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that," but it is all good, all well.

CHAPTER XIX.

"**N**OW there," said Mrs. Chose, laying down the *September Agriculturist*, "is another proof positive about hasty judgments. Here's somebody who says of 'Moore's Concord,' 'What stuff!'"

"I wish we had a garden full of such stuff," said I.

"Of course," said Mrs. Chose. "It was all we could do to spare ears enough for seed. Light soil, too, but not a wet season. Maybe that makes the difference."

"Our wet season has begun just in time for the turnips," said I.

"Well, when I am a man," said Rose, "I shall invent a machine for thinning turuips. My back was quite broken yesterday, and isn't quite mended to-day."

"When you're an older gardener," said Mrs. Chose, "you'll learn to sow 'em thinner, and so save your back and your seed too."

But it's hard work anyway. It's a sort of a strengthening plaster to get paid for it."

"Paid for it!" repeated Rose. "I should like to see myself thinning turnips if I wasn't paid for it!"

"I should like to see you, very much, if you had it to do," said Mrs. Chose. "But duty always does pay, child. Only because her coin don't chink, we're sometimes wise enough to feel cheated."

"Don't you think the chink is pleasant, Mrs. Chose?" said my young niece, speaking softly now.

"I guess I do! if anybody does," said our lodger, smiling. "It's something for which the ear of man has a natural affinity. Makes all the difference of marching with the music."

"But the march must go on just the same without it," said Rose. "Yes, I see."

"One has to straighten one's thoughts out now and then just to know how they look," said Mrs. Chose, knitting away at 2:40 speed. "Now I had a friend once who never sold her turnips, and liked thinning 'em out just as little as you do."

"Well?" said Rose eagerly. "What did she do, Mrs. Chose?"

"She thinned 'em," said Mrs. Chose, tri-

umphantly finishing the letters she was knitting into the top of her stocking. "And she wrote about 'em. Relieved her mind that way."

"Oh! what did she write?" cried Rose. "What *could* she write about turnips?"

"It wasn't all about turnips," said Mrs. Chose, "and I'm not sure but I've forgotten it. Something like this I guess it began. She called it:

"THE BUSY WOMAN'S LAMENT."

"I sometimes wish that I could live once more
On money paid, and not on money earned;
Could spend one week as all my life before
Those lessons came, that I so well have learned.

"To walk on carpets other hands have swept,
Not to remember dust will cover chairs;
Have fires and tables ready while I slept,
And breakfast cared for, all without my cares.

"To spend the morning over pen and ink,
Dinner in sweet forgetfulness the while;
Nor be obliged, when at my books, to think
Sewing accumulates in heaped-up pile.

"Now, when I busy am, with head or hand,
Cakes must be watched, and then be molded;
And I must fold my desk, my thoughts remand,
Because the table-cloth must be *unfolded*.

"My mind of quietness is oft bereft
By fruit to pare, or pickles spoiling,
Or when (as now) untended I have left
A pan of syrup on the fire boiling.

"Turnips and beets have lost their ancient charms,
I know their whereabouts, and how they grew;
And cauliflower speaks of tired arms,
And celery revives my toils anew.

"And even my flowers, gentle things! they stand
Doing their best to pay me for my labor;
But here are mallows, sad to eye and hand,
And sorrel overruns like Hamed Baber.

"Not difficult to manage, were that all,
But empty cupboards come before my eye;
I hear the printers for more copy call,
And weeding-fork and trowel are laid by.

"I sometimes wish—— And yet that is not wise:
'Whatever is,' is best, as well as right;
And things perverse to our one-sided eyes,
Run smoothly on to a far-reaching sight.

"Duty is on our hands, and that is all:
Over the *what*, no human power reaches;
She weareth now a great mask, now a small—
A book to write, and then a pan of peaches!"

How Rose laughed, and I too, for that matter!

"Ah!" said Rose, "she just wanted the chink! And do you know, Aunt Bethia, it is the first of September? and do you know ——"

And Rose took her little money-box from her pocket, and poured, as she said, "all August" into my lap.

Twenty-eight dollars and forty-five cents!

"Don't let's hear any more about backs after that," said Mrs. Chose. "And my dear, don't forget that your spinach, and your kale, and your corn salad, and your winter radishes, should all be in the ground before September is half gone.

CHAPTER XX.

I HAVE been so busy with the results of our garden, that I forget sometimes to make notes for next year's use. Mrs. Chose says that should be done regularly. When next year comes, she says, if all is well, I shall be longing for just such a book of notes,—wanting to know not only what I planted, but how I liked it.

Well, for one thing, we like our queer "Squaw" corn very much. Mrs. Chose brought a little from Ohio, just to try; and then afterwards I saw it mentioned in Mr. Gregory's Catalogue; only he calls it "Dacotah" corn, while ours hails from Nebraska; brought from the Indians by the Indian agents,—so they say. It's the funniest corn—real red, white, and blue. Some ears all white, and some all red, and some all blue, or purple; and some sprinkled with all three. One ear came on table perfectly white, but with a deep-red cob—the red flushing all up through.

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Mr. Gregory calls it field corn; but we have called it "sweet," and not found out that we were mistaken. The ears are *very* long, even, and handsome.

I tried an experiment with a bit of empty ground, and made Asa put in a good planting of "Crosby's Early," so late as the last week in July—a fortnight beyond the "regulation" day. Asa almost grumbled at such waste of time and seed; but I knew it was worth doing, even for fodder, and it *might* give us a late crop. At present (September 20th) the corn is tasseled out finely; but whether those pretty banners of green silk will turn brown in the hands of the sun—or the frost—remains to be seen.

Late planted beets and wax beans are in the like uncertain case. The venture was small, the loss could not be great, and the gain *would* be a gain—that is all about it.

"Excelsior" tomatoes hold their own, and the "Trophies" have never caught up. I wonder if our seed could have been bad? And our "White Apple" tomatoes are excellent and peculiar—more *fruity* than other kinds, and the little grape and cherry tomatoes as good and useful as if they were larger. Nay, more so. Better for baking,

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better for stewing than any, unless the pear-shaped.

Turnips are thinned out, and doing well. Rose says they would grow faster if they knew how near the frost came two nights ago; but I suppose they know their own power of endurance better than she does.

Sales, just now, are chiefly of cabbages and tomatoes. Tomatoes are down—only five cents a quart; but when one has so many, even that pays. Now and then there is a call for potatoes, at sixty cents the half-bushel—now and then, also, for beans. And the other day a man passing by the garden bought ten cents' worth of carrots.

And another wandering rabbit found his way in from the woods, and took a good taste of my celery, for nothing! So it goes.

We are putting spinach and kale in every available place, as fast as other things come off, rolling the seed well in to prevent its drying. Asa got an old broken roller of Mr. Fogy's at a bargain, mended it up, and Mr. Fogy has been sorry ever since! We haven't.

Mrs. Chose gave me a new piece of advice to-day. "My dear," she said, "why don't you have some fruit handy to fill up spare corners in your market baskets?" For Rose had

been lamenting that there was not a great deal to send round to-day.

"Fruit!" I repeated in amaze.

"You may notice," said Mrs. Chose, sweeping the horizon with her knitting needle, "that you don't get much of a crop of anything round the fence. Except weeds."

"I do notice it pretty often," said I.

"Exactly," said Mrs. Chose. "Now there's no use in that. Make every inch of your ground pay."

"But how?" I said. "I'm sure I'm willing enough, Mrs. Chose."

"Run your other crops 'most up to the fence, and then stop," said Mrs. Chose, describing diagrams in the air with her free needle. "Leave a six-foot border—or less, if you can't spare that—all round. Fill it with bones first, and grape vines afterwards."

"Grape vines!"

"Ay," said Mrs. Chose, "grape vines. Not your foreign things that have to be tucked up in winter blankets, but good, hardy Americans—'Concords,' 'Jonas,' 'Catawbas,' 'Delawares.' You'll find pound papers of them the handiest things you ever saw, to fill up spare corners among the cabbages."

I set down my basket of apples, and fairly

put myself down in a chair to take breath, and consider, and pull my thoughts out of the tangle.

"Do you really mean that!" I said.

"So I found 'em," said Mrs. Chose, making her needles fly.

"And will people want grapes?" I queried again, doubtfully.

"When they've seen 'em," said Mrs. Chose. 'Supply always starts a demand. I'd stick a vine or an apple or something, in every spare foot I had.'

CHAPTER XXI.

SEPTEMBER 26th.—I confess I am pleased. My late planted corn is actually in picking order! Some of it, that is. Anything prettier than certain ears I brought in to-day for breakfast, need not be desired. It was "Crosby's Early" that I planted, and it's very good. Not so remarkable as our "Squaw" corn and the "Mexican," but still excellent. There was one drawback to my pleasure—I found everybody's cow trying it, before we had a taste ourselves!

You see I had gone out very early, for a mouthful of fresh air, while Asa was doing up some of the kitchen morning chores; and there they were! Mrs. Smith's dun, and Mr. Pink's brindle, and two of Mr. Fogy's, and the young heifer from next door. They had not disturbed the fence, but just walked in, the natural way, after some two-footed reckless creature who had been in to survey

our garden and left the gate open, Won't I chain it fast in future!

O! there was Dick Warren's speckled horse as well. But considering how many there were, they did very little mischief. Just mowed down a row of "Farmers' Club Sweet Corn" that was left standing for seed (I believe there's a stalk or two left), and then went straight to my "Crosby's Early," and demolished about one third of that. The poorest third, however, which was some comfort, and I found a few ears fit to pick, which was still more. It was a little hard to see the pretty green patch so marred, with ears of corn all stripped and bitten in two.

Well, I routed the enemy in the hottest of haste, and they careered across the garden in the highest of spirits, pulling as many turnips as they could on their way. By which means I suddenly discovered that the turnips are large enough to pull. There's no great loss, without some small gain, as Mrs. Chose says.

"Profit and loss, my dear," she called to me from her window, as I came slowly back to the house. "What's the *per contra* this morning?"

It is so astonishing that people can be

so careless! But we've locked the gate now.

Sept. 27th.—Market day. Not very much to send, however; tomatoes ripen slowly with these cool days, and nights that just border on frost, or rather more than that. There are "Limas" wanted, but though the vines hang full of pods, the pods are *not* as full as they should be of beans. And these people wouldn't be content with half-sized beans, not if I gave them double measure. So there was little to fill baskets to-day, except cabbages and some of our pretty turnips. These last sold well, Asa said. It's early for them here. He emptied all his baskets, and brought back eighty cents. Grapes *would* be handy just now. Mrs. Chose said true. Asa tells me some of the people keep asking for fruit—melons, plums, pears; almost anything, it would seem.

A fine rain this afternoon, and I see the spinach is up nicely. The late-planted wax-beans nearly hide the ground, and the beets are making good progress. But I notice that the "Egyptian" beets (there were a few rows in the plat) are far ahead of the others, and really make quite a show. Wanting some beans for dinner, and choosing rather to let

the "Limas" grow, I picked a mess of young "Concords" for string beans. And Mrs. Chose declared they were the best we had had all summer. Very rich and tender, and very handsome too, broad, and flat. I have never tried the "Concords" in this way before.

We are contriving how to increase our stock of manure for next year. Mrs. Chose says much may be done, even without patent stables, and acids, and expensive fertilizers. So we work out her counsels as far as we can. All the bones from the house, great and small, are put in old barrels or boxes, with alternate layers of strong wood ashes, and then sprinkled with water. They soon crumble under this process. This we have proved. Then weeds, and rubbish, and refuse of many kinds, uneatable by pigs or chickens, are thrown in a waste corner, far from the house, where the pigs can turn and tread them, and work them up for their amusement and our profit. Into this corner goes a load of dry leaves now and then, when they get too thick on the walk, with the trimmings of the grass edgings, and once in a while a tub of soapsuds from the house. All the low spots about the barnyard have been emptied of their rich contents,

and as fast as he can Asa refills them with dry muck. So what with preparing and carrying on, and finishing up, we are all pretty busy.

CHAPTER XXII.

“THE success of all garden operations depends upon preparatory measures.”

So says Mr. Henderson, in his “Gardening for Profit,” and he certainly is authority on all points of *success*. But they’re just the hardest thing—these preparatory measures! Now we manage—Asa, and Rose, and I—to keep up with the garden and ahead of the weeds most days and weeks; but to clear away the present, so far as to be able to take up the future, that *is* a job. I know what a good one it is when done. I know by and by the present would grow easier under that system of things. If one could only begin! But one does want a little bit of room for a start.

I was turning this all over and over in my mind, outwardly cutting sage, and inwardly cutting difficulties, when Mr. Fogy came sauntering through the garden.

“Mornin,” he said, concisely.

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“Good morning,” I answered. “Mr. Fogy, may I trouble you to shut the gate? We had our garden somewhat injured last week by a careless person who left our gate open.”

“What did he eat up?” inquired Mr. Fogy, not exactly sugared by my implication. “Don’t see much here, for my part!”

“Your cows found a good deal,” said I, cutting my sage.

“That’s it!” said Mr. Fogy, taking a cheerful survey of the garden. “Wife said she couldn’t for the life of her tell whether the last churnin’ was most cabbagey or turnipy.”

“Didn’t have a particularly strong flavor of young sweet corn, did it?” said I, a little vexed. “Because *that* was what they eat most of, Mr. Fogy.”

“Thought so!” said our impassable neighbor. “One of ‘em’s been ailin’ ever sen’.”

I gave up Mr. Fogy as a bad job, and gathered the sage leaves into my basket.

“Goin’ to run this here concern another season?” he began again.

“I hope so.”

“What’s it cost ye now?” said Mr. Fogy, stooping for a sage leaf, and beginning to chew it with apparent relish.

"I don't quite know," I said. "There's the seed, say ten dollars—it wasn't as much as that, I think; but call it ten."

"Boy's time," suggested Mr. Fogy.

"Boy's time don't count in this case," said I, "for he had nothing else to do. There was four dollars and a half a day for your team, Mr. Fogy."

"Team *and* wagon," put in Mr. Fogy, with some haste.

"Nine dollars," said I, summing up.

"Muck cost ye heavy, after all—didn't it, now?" said our neighbor, taking another sage leaf.

"Not very," said I, "for we hired a cheaper team the rest of the time, without a man. Asa drove himself. But set down ploughing and drawing muck, and two or three loads of manure, at fifteen dollars."

"Fifteen and ten's twenty five," said Mr. Fogy. "Ever seen the color o' one of 'em back again?"

"Ay, truly," answered I, with some importance. "I've seen every one of them back, Mr. Fogy, already; and each one brought another with it, and some brought two."

Mr. Fogy whistled slightly at that, being at

the moment unprovided with any other reply, and presently changed the subject.

"Had to give up your celery, didn't ye?" he said. "Thought you would, when I saw it a plantin'. Celery's got to be started earlier, and earthed up along through the season, to shew for much."

"That's just what they say you *shouldn't* do, Mr. Fogy," said I.

"Perhaps you can tell what I *should* do, then," said Mr. Fogy, securely, "since you're so glib on what I *shouldn't*."

"I can tell you what Mr. Henderson says," returned I, setting down my basket, and standing up myself, to be more impressive. "Sow your seed in April, and plant out in July——"

"Supposin' you can catch your plants," interrupted Mr. Fogy. "Mine would be somewhere along the top of the house by that time."

"Mow them off, or shear them rather, once or twice, then," said I; "it makes them more stocky."

"Think likely it has some effect on 'em," said Mr. Fogy. "Mow 'em off. Well, what next, Miss Tiller? Go ahead!"

"Next," said I, the clearness of my thoughts

not improved by such a shaking. "Next—you set them out, Mr. Fogy. Not in trenches, but in rich, level ground, the rows three feet apart, and the plants six inches. And you're very careful to press the earth tight round the roots. Then keep the weeds down between the rows, and keep the soil loose and mellow. Then by the middle of August—or from that on—you begin to 'handle' the plants; gathering the leaves up in one hand, and drawing the earth round them to make the stalks grow straight. Then you let it stand for a week, and after that bank up the earth with your spade, half way up the stalks. Then, in another week or so, bank the earth quite to the top, and in ten days more dig your celery."

"What d'ye get then?" quoth Mr. Fogy. "Turnip tops? 'Pack your earth tight,' and work it 'loose;' mow 'em down, and bank 'em up."

And Mr. Fogy turned away with a burst of laughter which rings in my ears yet.

CHAPTER XXIII.

I MUST confess that market business is rather slow these days. Asa has been sick, so we could not send round to the houses; and then, the people have been waiting for him, or else maybe they have bought from some of the travelling hucksters. At least they have not come much to the house. Forty five cents for turnips and beets, and twenty three for cabbages—that covers all the sales of last week. But there must be such weeks I suppose, though one would rather not have them come just when the largest cabbages are ready to cut, and when some of the little ones are beginning to burst open with a second growth. By the way, we had a funny demand for a half bushel of *green* tomatoes! which, however, was promptly met. That was week before last. Lima beans are almost too small to be marketable now—the pods do not fill out well; so we are keeping them all for our own use, and they are very good.

Meantime, as we are neither men nor boys, and not quite strong minded enough to take our own wares to market, Rose and I busy ourselves in the garden at every leisure minute. Turnips bear more and more thinning, and squashes and pumpkins are to bring in, the vines being dead; and tomatoes must be gathered, and young beets need working. We are taking down the bean vines now, before there is frost enough to spoil them for fodder; and the poles lie heaped together, waiting for Asa to take them away.

Then there is gathering the seed corn of different kinds, with the labeling and hanging up to dry; and I *think* we shall have seed ears from "Stowell's" Evergreen. We planted a large patch, and five stalks came up! Mrs. Chose says that particular kind has generally served her just so, and that perhaps—being so late a kind—the seed is seldom full ripe. So I am specially anxious to save seed of our own.

Our little late planting of "Crosby's" Early pays us in one way at least. The cows did not leave enough to make a show in market, as it ripens slowly, but we have it for ourselves. And such a supply of corn stalks as is stored up in the barn, *our* cow has not seen

for a long time. We've tried her with a few cabbage leaves too, now and then.

"It's wicked to let all those stumps go to waste," said Mrs. Chose to us one day.

"But the pig won't touch 'em," said Rose. "He's grown dainty on nubbins, and declines even beans."

"Give 'em to the cow then," said Mrs. Chose. "I hope you ain't trying to choke *her* on nubbins."

"But our butter!" cried I, aghast at the bare idea.

"More of it, that's all," said Mrs. Chose.

"And none fit to eat," said I.

"Fit to eat? Nonsense!" said Mrs. Chose. You needn't smother her in cabbage. Just pull off the leaves on those deserted stumps—few at a time—and give them to her now and then. Not every day, but sometimes. There won't be cabbage enough in the milk to make you think of the letter C."

And sure enough, so it has proved.

October 11th.—Asa is better to-day, and went round as usual with his bag of cabbage and basket of turnips, our two chief selling crops at present. Result one dollar and sixty-five cents!

And we had a "Hubbard" squash for din-

ner, certainly the best squash that was ever boiled in *this* house. I can imagine none better.

October 12th.—Mrs. Chose may well talk of ups and downs! She says you *can't* make your garden level if you were to try, and I'm sure ours isn't. Yesterday when Asa went through with his vegetables for market, he left the garden gate unlocked, and in the night a great storm of wind and rain just took the old gate off its hinges (I mean the wind did) and laid it flat,—whereupon this morning the cows went in, each one as straight before her as the men into Jericho, and with much the same result. No, I am wrong there; they *began* the same work, but were happily cut short by Asa's sudden appearance out of the window. He took one jump out, as being quicker than the ordinary method of exit.

Well, they finished my late planting of early corn—*that* experiment has ended satisfactorily, to the cows—and they eat up all my seed stalks of the "Squaw" corn, kindly dropping one ear for a keepsake, and they pulled up a peck or so of turnips, and that was about all—except annoying me. I haven't been so disturbed by any garden affair in a long time. I guess I was tired.

CHAPTER XXIV.

SOMETIMES I don't like to speak of an experiment until it has turned into a success, and so all this time I have said nothing about our sweet potatoes. But it is time now, when —, no, I won't tell the end of my story before the beginning.

Far back in the Spring, or rather in the edge of the Winter, when we were mapping out our garden, I showed Mrs. Chose a great spot in the very middle of our plan, with which clearly nothing could be done.

"*That's* just so much waste ground," I said.

"Most of it is, just now, aint it?" said Mrs. Chose.

"Yes, but we can do something with the rest," said I.

"You can do something with everything," said Mrs. Chose, knitting particularly fast. "What ails that?"

"It's a sandy hollow," I said. "Flat and

dry, and poor as ever it can be. Seems to just gather in the heat."

"Wants it, I s'pose," said our lodger, with a curl of her mouth. "What does it grow now?"

"Don't grow anything," put in Rose. "Dewberries grow at the top, and run down there and look about, and finding nothing come back."

"Well," said Mrs. Chose, beginning a new needle with a certain imposing deliberation. "I'll tell you what *you'll* find if you run down there and look about."

"Snakes?" suggested I.

"Sweet potatoes!" said Mrs. Chose, with her needles at full speed again.

"Sweet potatoes!" echoed Rose.

"In that hollow," said I.

"Only place in the lot where they'd pay," said our lodger.

"But they don't grow here naturally," said I.

"Not spontaneously," said Mrs. Chose. "What does, but mulleins?"

"And you think they could be coaxed to grow down there?" questioned I.

"Coaxed? Nonsense! Coax your egg-plants," said Mrs. Chose. "Sweet potatoes

have got sense enough to grow when they find the chance."

"How many would it take to plant that hollow?" said I.

"Now see," said Mrs. Chose, laying down her knitting, "we may as well begin at the bottom of the wall. You send off for half a peck of sweet potatoes—good sound ones—and I'll show you what to do with them."

Well, the bottom of the wall certainly filled my head for the rest of the day. I sent for the potatoes, half a peck of "Southern Queens" as the catalogue called them, and Rose went to the express office every day till they came. By that time we had made our preparations—a rough little hot-bed (Asa was not very neat-handed) four feet by three, for which we bought a few barrow-loads of horse manure from the tavern stables; framed in with odds and ends of boards that we happened to have, and covered with an old kitchen window, also on hand. There was little waiting for the bed to cool off; the manure took in frost and snow before it was in place, so that warming up seemed more needful. We spread it out as well as we could—a small heap not more than two feet thick—brought the top to a tolerable level, covered that with a few inches of the

best soil we could find, put on the sash, and waited.

"My dear," said Mrs. Chose one day, "that bed wouldn't scorch a mosquito. I should use it at once."

So we planted our Southern Queens close together, and lightly covered, watered them, put on the sash once more, and then began to watch.

I don't remember now how long it was before they began to sprout, but we watched and aired and watered with untiring zeal, and by and by up came the pretty shoots as thick as one could desire.

In the mean while, I should say, we had prepared the hollow according to rule—a Maryland rule—which Mrs. Chose had proved. The hollow was first ploughed, then deep furrows were laid open from end to end—say eight inches deep and three feet apart. These furrows were next filled up with muck, and the plough was run through again, throwing the earth over upon the muck, thus making a ridge. Then the top of the ridge was just flattened off a little.

Then Mrs. Chose went to our hot-bed with a basket, and slipping her fingers down among the potatoes, deftly nipped off the young

shoots, with the tuft of rootlets belonging to each one unharmed. The potatoes were left undisturbed. These plants we set out along the flat top of our ridges, about two feet apart, as far as the number would go; and as soon as more were ready, and there was prospect of rain, they, too, were taken to the hollow and set out. And so, in time, our half-peck gave us plants enough and to spare—we could not use them all. Of course, we did not begin setting out till frosts were over.

"Now," said Mrs. Chose, surveying the hollow with great satisfaction, "they've got nothing to do but grow."

And they did that well. The delicate green vines ran down the ridges and covered every inch of ground deep, deep with their dark leaves, until the hollow was the greenest thing about the place—a thick mat of verdure. It was worth doing just to look at.

Well, in August we began to explore, and from that time on bought no more sweet potatoes. And the other day—since the frost came and blackened the vines—Asa dug up our "experiment,"—eleven bushels, good measure! And such fine potatoes, and so big! I picked up two that lay on top of one barrel this morning, and they weighed almost

three pounds apiece—it wanted but an ounce or two.

There were six rows in the hollow—rows about fifty paces long, Asa said, whatever that may mean. I never can do much with men's measures. Fingers I can understand, but paces are a stretch beyond.

CHAPTER XXV.

AT last the frost has done its work. We had had a premonitory bite or two before, and then on the night of October 20th came a grand, effectual "black" frost.

I stood at the window this morning early, looking out at my garden. A white frost was there this time, lying thick and soft, like a light snow. The cabbages looked blue and undaunted, the turnip leaves were crumpled, the beet leaves looked pinched, the spinach gave no sign. Elsewhere the ground was cleared. Off under the distant shed I could see the ends of the stored bean poles, peering over the pile of pea sticks, and near by the old cow stood munching the dry stocks of our "Early Minnesota," with a half cheese pumpkin for variety. Further off still was our white pig, with the other half of the pumpkin, and some cabbage leaves and other odds and ends. "Just a trifle or two, that he thought he could eat," as Jane Taylor says.

Down stairs, within doors, I knew Rose was

frying some of our big sweet potatoes for breakfast, and that a dish of our little beauties of white beans stood all ready to bake for dinner. The parsnip and salsify bed was beyond my sight, below in the hollow, and there too were the carrots still, and some of our late Savoy.

The turnips are very fine, and there's more Kohl Rabi than we can eat. I could make up quite a load—and it's market day, too,—but Asa is not well enough to do duty. That has been the way pretty much all this month, and so the money making has been small. Six or eight dollars' worth Asa sold, the few times he was able to go, and the rest of the things we must try and turn to some other account. There's no hurry about many of them, as Mrs. Chose says,—these late things "know how to wait." And there is our own cellar to supply, and we may have late purchasers. And of course we can leave in the ground as many parsnips and salsify roots as we like. *If* we have cabbage left on our hands that we don't know what to do with, Mrs. Chose recommends sauer-kraut.

But with all these drawbacks, the garden looks wonderfully bright to me. It has been such a pleasure, such an interest; it is so

good to *use* what one has, and make the most of it. What a paradise of weeds and wildness the most of that ground was this time last year! Now, the beauty is in the past tense of course, but the ground shows what it has done. It looks useful. And up stairs in my drawer is near a hundred dollars of "found money."

That is without counting all the *saving* it has been. Why, the garden has furnished half of our living this summer, and will all winter.

We have plenty of bean seed for next year—that's one thing; and corn of most of the kinds; but "Stowell's" Evergreens preferred not to get ripe, and so got frozen. Peas we eat or sold all up. Lettuce planted itself abundantly for a fall crop, and so salads are as plenty as in June. And of course we have saved potatoes enough for planting as well as to cook,—barrels of white and barrels of sweet; and a great pile of the ripest pumpkins for cooking and for drying,

I thought of everything, it seems to me, while I stood at that window; it all looked so wonderful. Last year, at this time, we were buying much of our winter stock, trying to contrive how little would do; and now

there are so many, and so many kinds, that I have to take them in turn for fear some should be slighted.

"Tells, don't it?" said Mrs. Chose, coming from her room in answer to the summons to breakfast, to which I had paid no heed. She stopped by my side and looked out too.

"Tells?" I repeated; "it pays the most wonderful interest!"

"Pleasure, health, profit, and plenty," said Mrs. Chose. She was knitting even then, as she stood there.

I leaned my head against the window and looked out again. The garden was very dear to me now. How pretty it looked, with the early sunbeams glinting and gleaming over the white frost!

"What does it remind you of!" said Mrs. Chose, putting in a new needle as she looked.

"Remind me of?" I said, "I don't know, Mrs. Chose. There's the busy spring, and the green summer, and the ripe fall, and the bountiful winter."

"Thou crownest the year with Thy goodness!" said Mrs. Chose, rolling up her work at a second call from Rose.

And I knew that was just it.