

# A Boy and a Garden

By LILIAN E. TALBERT

I AM going to tell the readers of The Junior Call a true story of a boy and the remarkable things he has been able to do in a garden.

Why I am so eager to tell this story is because I am sure that what this boy has done every other boy can do, if he sets about it with the same determination and the same persistence.

From the beginning this boy has been handicapped. His first seven years were spent in one long struggle to keep life in the frail body. At the end of that time a change came and the anxious parents made a new home for their boy. And here, nestled in the warm sunshine of the hills, with the good salt air of the bay giving strength, another life began for him. And the child grew to an understanding of an hour free from suffering and pain.

There was a large yard in the new home, and there the child was told to play; but what fun was that, playing alone, when other boys went whistling off to school?

Mother knew. She and the boy should have a garden. Then began glorious days, when the little fellow could actually use the hoe and the rake, and could turn the good, brown earth, and plant the little seeds.

Spring was kind to that first garden, and kinder still to the frail child who now began to show the promise of a healthy boyhood. True, he still lacked much, and his speech seemed to respond most slowly to the forces that had called him back to life. But mother always understood him when the words refused to come, and then, there was the garden with the sunshine and the salt air.

That was six years ago. Today that boy is a strong, manly looking fellow, 5 feet 6 inches high, straight as an arrow, full of the joy of living, and ready to tell what that garden has done for him not only physically, but educationally.

That first year, when mother was his companion, he began by growing lettuce. But when the lettuce was raised what was to be done with it? Well, mother would buy it. So mother, his friend and companion, was his first customer, and she paid him for that lettuce just what she would have paid in the market. This gave him encouragement, and the next year, he enlarged his holdings. Besides the lettuce, there should be peas. This being successful, a year or two later he took up the cultivation of beans.

Then began his experiments with raising the different kinds of lettuce, the different kinds of peas, the different kinds of beans. He found that certain seeds were not adapted to the soil; that raising certain varieties of vegetables did not pay in proportion to the time spent, and that it was important that he study the demand of his market. For, though his mother had been his first customer, neighbors had soon found that they could depend on him to furnish them with garden products better and fresher than could be had in the market and at the market price.

With increasing demands for his produce, it became necessary to increase the variety of his supply, though he still believes it is best to understand the raising and marketing of a limited number of varieties. So he spends his efforts on lettuce, peas, beans, vegetable marrow and beets. He undertook the raising of onions, but he found that they did not pay. He has learned the reason why. Much information has been gained by these experiments. He tried raising sweet peas, but found they did not pay, owing to the fact that in his vicinity flowers were abundant.

This boy's garden is a small plot of land about 25x75 feet. From this limited area he cleared last year \$93.33. Is that not a good showing for a boy of 12? This last year he has done all the work himself, caring for the soil, planting, gathering and marketing his produce before and after school hours. Last year was the first year he has been able to attend public school. Unfortunately for him, in his busiest spring month, he became ill with scarlet fever. There were many weeks when it was impossible for him to be



THEN CAME THE GLORIOUS DAYS WHEN HE COULD USE THE HOE AND RAKE...

out. Had it not been for this his yearly income from the garden no doubt would have reached far over \$100.

He was anxious to know just how much could be made from 10 cents' worth of seed. On the 20th of July he bought the 10 cent package of vegetable marrow and began his planting. The last of the vegetable marrow crop was gathered and sold November 18; time, 3 months 28 days. His careful accounts show the exact returns of that

10 cents' worth of seed to be \$18.15. This is a rate of increase on his investment few businessmen can beat. This calls to my mind a formula given by a professor of agriculture:

Seed plus ground plus heat plus moisture plus boy equals corn. But in this case it would be:

Seed (10c) plus ground plus heat plus moisture plus boy equals vegetable marrow (\$18.15).

In the center of his 25 by 75 foot gar-

## The Elephants at Home

When we see a company of great elephants moving along with a circus parade do we ever think how far from home these huge creatures are? Perhaps they have traveled all over the world several times, yet they would rather be back in Asia or Africa, where they were probably born. Best of all, an elephant likes to live on broad plains, in forests or among gently rising hills. He does not like severe weather, either hot or cold, so usually lives in a temperate climate, where he spends much time on the shady river banks. How he enjoys filling his great trunk with water and then sending the cooling streams over his big brown body!

The elephant is the largest creature known, yet he is alert, and, it is said, approaches the nearest of any animal to man in prudence and reasoning. He is said to possess a kind of affection for those who treat him kindly, and is docile enough to be trained for performing many tricks and working with great strength. In some countries elephants move great trees or carry heavy burdens. Sometimes when the large circus wagon sinks into a muddy field it can only be moved by an elephant, that lifts it where the circus man wants to have it. When with the circus the elephants eat a great deal of hay, but when roaming in the wild homes they eat much green food. The tree branches, tree roots, leaves of small plants, as well as bulbs, are considered very palatable by these hard skinned animals. Sometimes a whole acre of ground will be plowed up by the great tusks of the elephant in his search for food to which his fine sense of smell has guided him. Did you ever notice that the elephant can never get his mouth to the ground? For this reason Mother Nature has given this great animal a kind of hand, which we call his trunk. When you toss peanuts to the elephant see how quickly he uses his trunk to throw the nuts into his mouth.

The lumberman will "split" with his best friend.

## Queer Money

A traveler in Central America would find that though he had a purse full of our money, yet he could buy nothing. There a handful of cowrie shells are of more value than a \$10 bill, for these shells are the money of the people living in that uncivilized region. This money is strung on strong cords and carried about by the persons who want to buy. At each purchase a portion of the cord of shells is cut off and given as money. The South sea islanders pay for their simple needs with a kind of rope made of flying fox fur or tiny feathers of birds of brilliant plumage. You have probably seen pictures of the Chinese carrying their strings of money.

Their coins, called "cash," each have a hole in the center so that a heavy cord may easily be passed through them. Knots tied in the string show every time a hundred cash are strung on the cord. Because these cash are of little value a great quantity of them has to be carried when marketing is to be done. How strange it would seem to us if we had to take one or two servants about with us to carry our money. That is what the rich Chinese do, for it takes about 400 cash to equal one of our dollars. In the island of Madagascar gold and silver are used for money. There these precious metals are seen in all sizes and shapes, for their value depends upon their weight. A traveler once visiting in Mexico received two small cakes of soap for his change after making a purchase. He could not understand at first that the government stamp upon the soap made it into money. As long as this stamp remained clear or distinct the money was good to spend, but when the stamp wore off the soap was only good as a cleanser.

## Marvels of Wireless Telegraphy

Wireless telegraphy made a long reach the other day. The Tennessee was five days out from Honolulu when it sent out a weather report which was picked up on the apparatus at Table bluff, on the coast of California, 4,580 miles away.

den is a sprouting box on standards.

"Why," I asked, "is this above the ground?"

He smiled and said, "This is my sprouting bed for lettuce. Should I leave it on the ground the young plants would be ruined by snails and slugs."

"But what do you do when you transplant them?" I persisted, pointing to his splendid heads of lettuce in their well shaped beds ready for gathering "Surely these are great temptations for the snails."

"When the young lettuce is transplanted," he answered, "I put a row of lime around the whole bed. The plants are never molested then."

He manages his crop of lettuce on the college plan—his freshmen are entering the sprouting box while his sophomores are emerging from it. His juniors at this time are becoming "heady" in the open rows, while his seniors are developed and ready for market. With this arrangement his customers may find lettuce on hand at any time of the year. You can see by this that the boy has an understanding of his work. He recognizes at sight the different varieties of lettuce, and can discuss the relative values of the "May King" and the "Improved Hanson" from a tradesman's point of view.

This year he has marketed 100 pounds of peas. As soon as the old pea vines could be removed the ground was immediately planted to beans. Remember, his garden plot is but 25 by 75 feet, and he must practice economy of space. With the beans he is raising but one kind, "The Kentucky Wonders." He is familiar with other varieties, but his experience has led him to believe these to be the very best.

Every morning this boy is up by 5 o'clock and out in his garden. On the particular morning I saw him he had returned from delivering 55 heads of the finest lettuce one could buy anywhere. Perhaps one of the secrets of his success is "quality and fair prices."

Aside from the abundant good health and the joy of living this garden is giving to this boy a practical education in business methods.

He keeps his accounts as well as the best paid book keeper in a large business firm. Many of his customers run monthly bills. When his produce is delivered he makes out a charge tag and places it on file. At the end of the month these accounts are made into bills and presented for payment. When paid they are receipted and an entry is made of the same in his account book. Should a customer pay cash he puts a tag he terms bank, on file, showing the money has been placed in his small First national bank. At the end of the month the returns from his garden are placed to his account in an Oakland bank.

A tabulated record has been made of his exact income each month since 1907. This has proved an incentive. If in June, 1907, he made \$6, then he feels that in June, 1908, he must make more than \$6, else he is not succeeding in terms of his own advancement.

His tabulated account for the three years is full of interest, each month showing an increase over the month of the preceding year, with one noticeable exception, when nothing was made. That was the month he was quarantined with scarlet fever.

This boy is not going to spend his well earned money carelessly. He is planning to invest it. He expects in time to pay for a lot with this money, coming as it does to him from the soil.

Another thing, to my knowledge he is the first child to have a commercial account in bank. When his parents requested that such an account be opened to him they were told that commercial accounts to children had never been granted. Many people question the advisability of allowing children access to funds by check. However, this boy's father desired that his son should become familiar with practical business methods, and on special request a commercial account was opened to him.

Now, this boy selects and buys his own clothes, paying for them by check from the allowance his father has placed in bank for him. It can be seen that this boy is making a success of his undertaking. He works not because he must, nor alone for the money that is in it, but because by it and through it he has gained and is gaining so much that is good to have—health, training, education, success.

How many readers of The Junior Call have a garden? If not, why?

When it is seen what this small garden has done in so short a time for the frail little fellow of a few years ago, is it not worth while?

For health's sake alone it has been a success. For education it has been a success.

Some day I want to tell my readers how this boy, without going to school a day, made the seventh grade at the age of 12 years. I want to tell you of the charming way he has taken up the study of history and geography, making an average of 100 in these subjects during this, his first year at school.

Meanwhile think about the garden and in the early fall plan one of your own. While you are about it, be persistent. Do not get discouraged; it will pay.