

2 THE MEASURE OF THE RULE

Heretofore my life had been spent first in the labour of tilling a backwoods farm; second, in the labour of teaching a backwoods school. It is delightful to read in books about farming, and even the periodical press contains now and then articles upon agriculture so charmingly written that the reader is soon convinced of the simplicity, healthfulness and independence which a rural existence presents to its votaries, and as I peruse these contributions I am filled with a vague longing to go back to the land. Candour compels me to state, however, that at the time I was engaged in this vocation the prospects which look so well in print had not been presented to me. I was quite willing to leave to others the delights of raising wheat while I earned my bread in some other manner. Being thus determined to exchange the complex existence of a farm for the simple life of the city, I spent my evenings and wet days in study of one kind and another, reading everything in the shape of a book that came to my hands, discovering thus a very pretty taste for mathematics and science, finding algebra as interesting as the puzzle column in our weekly paper, while Euclid's problems seemed to be much better constructed than the average short story, with conclusions that were invariably more logical and satisfactory than the efforts of even our best authors, and thus it came about that one day I journeyed to our county town, passed certain examinations inflicted by the State, and emerged from the ordeal with a third-class certificate, licensing me to teach school for the term of three years from the date thereof.

I now got my first lesson regarding the nonsense talked by those charming writers who show the advantages of farming life. My day's work, instead of