

THE FAT OF THE LAND

CHAPTER I

MY EXCUSE

My sixtieth birthday is a thing of yesterday, and I have, therefore, more than half descended the western slope. I have no quarrel with life or with time, for both have been polite to me; and I wish to give an account of the past seven years to prove the politeness of life, and to show how time has made amends to me for the forced resignation of my professional ambitions. For twenty-five years, up to 1895, I practised medicine and surgery in a large city. I loved my profession beyond the love of most men, and it loved me; at least, it gave me all that a reasonable man could desire in the way of honors and emoluments. The thought that I should ever drop out of this attractive, satisfying life, never seriously occurred to me, though I was conscious of a strong and persistent force that urged me toward the soil. By choice and by training I was a physician, and I gloried in my work; but by instinct I was, am, and always shall be, a farmer. All my life I have had visions of farms