

much more money than was really necessary on the place, and in the ornamentation of Four Oaks. This, however, was part of the experiment. I asked the land not only to supply immediate necessities, but to minister to my every want, to gratify the eye, and please the senses by a harmonious fusion of utility and beauty. I wanted a fine country home and a profitable investment within the same ring fence.

Will you follow me through the search for the land, the purchase, and the tremendous house-cleaning of the first year? After that we will take up the years as they come, finding something of special interest attaching naturally to each. I shall have to deal much with figures and statistics, in a small way, and my pages may look like a school book, but I cannot avoid this, for in these figures and statistics lies the practical lesson. Theory alone is of no value. Practical application of the theory is the test. I am not imaginative. I could not write a romance if I tried. My strength lies in special detail, and I am willing to spend a lot of time in working out a problem. I do not claim to have spent this time and money without making serious mistakes; I have made many, and I am willing to admit them, as you will see in the following pages. I do claim, however, that, in spite of mistakes, I have solved the problem, and have proved that an intelligent farmer can live in luxury on the fat of the land.