

**OUR FARM OF FOUR
ACRES, AND THE
MONEY WE MADE BY IT**

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Our Farm of Four Acres, and the Money We Made by It by Miss Coulton

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MISS COULTON

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by
Miss Coulton

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1859.



CONTENTS.

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. WHERE SHALL WE LIVE?	1
II. OUR FIRST DIFFICULTY	16
III. OUR SECOND COW	24
IV. HOW TO MAKE BUTTER	31
V. WHAT WE MADE BY OUR COWS	36
VI. OUR PIGS	40
VII. OUR POULTRY	46
VIII. OUR LOSSES	52
IX. OUR PIGEONS	57
X. HOW WE CURED OUR HAMS	63
XI. OUR BREAD	68
XII. OUR KITCHEN-GARDEN	75
XIII. THE MONEY WE MADE	85
XIV. THE NEXT SIX MONTHS	91
XV. CONCLUSION	111

Success After Six Months

OUR FARM OF FOUR ACRES.

CHAPTER I.

WHERE SHALL WE LIVE ?

"WHERE shall we live?" that was a question asked by the sister of the writer, when it became necessary to leave London, and break up a once happy home rendered desolate by sudden bereavement.

"Ah! where indeed?" was the answer. "Where can we hope to find a house which will be suitable for ourselves, six children, and a small income?"

"Oh," answered H., "there can be no difficulty about that. Send for the 'Times,' and we shall find dozens of places that will do for us." So that mighty organ of information was procured, and its columns eagerly searched.

"But," said I, "what sort of place do we really mean to take?"

"That," replied H., "is soon settled. We must have a good-sized dining-room, small drawing-room, and a breakfast-room, which may be converted into a school-room. It must have a nursery and five good bed-chambers, a chaise-house, and stable for the pony and carriage; a large garden, and three or four acres of land, for we must keep a cow. It must not be more than eight miles from 'town,' or two from a station; it must be in a good neighbourhood, and it must ——"

"Stop! stop!" cried I; "how much do you intend to give a-year for all these conveniences?"

"How much? Why, I should say, we ought not to give more than 50*l.*"

"We *ought* not," said I gravely, "but I greatly fear we shall for that amount have to put up with a far inferior home to the one you contemplate. But come, let us answer a few of these advertisements; some of them depict the very place you wish for."

So after selecting those which, when

they had described in bright colours the houses to be let, added, "Terms very moderate," we "presented compliments" to Messrs. A., B., C., D., and in due time received cards to view the "desirable country residences" we had written about. But our hopes of becoming the fortunate occupants of any one of those charming abodes were soon dashed to the ground; for, with the cards, came the terms; and we found that a "very moderate rental" meant from 120*l.* to 150*l.* per annum. We looked at each other rather ruefully; and the ungenerous remark of "I told you so," rose to my lips. However I did not give it utterance, but substituted the words, "Never mind, let us send for another 'Times,' and only answer those advertisements which state plainly the rent required." This time we enlarged our ideas on the subjects of rent and distance, and resolved, that if that beautiful place *near* Esher would suit us, we would not mind giving 60*l.* a-year for it.

In a few days arrived answers to our last inquiries. We fixed on the one which appeared the most eligible, but were a little

dismayed to find that "near Esher" meant six miles from the station.

"Never mind," said H. resolutely, "the pony can take us to it in fine weather; and in winter we must not want to go to London."

We started the next morning by rail, and found the "Cottage" almost as pretty as it had appeared on paper. But, alas! it had been let the day previous to our arrival, and we had to return to town minus twenty-two shillings for our expenses.

The next day, nothing daunted—indeed rather encouraged by finding the house we had seen really equal to our expectations—we set off to view another "villa," which, from the particulars we had received from the agent, appeared quite as attractive. This time we found the place tenantless; and as far as we were concerned, it would certainly remain so. It had been represented as a "highly desirable country residence, and quite ready for the reception of a family of respectability." It was dignified with the appellation of "Middlesex Hall," and we were rather surprised when we found that this high-



sounding name signified a mean-looking place close to the road; and when the door was opened for our admission, that we stepped at once from the small front court into the drawing-room, from which a door opened into a stone kitchen. The rest of the accommodation corresponded with this primitive mode of entrance; the whole place was in what is commonly called a "tumble-down" condition: there was certainly plenty of garden, and two large meadows, but, like the rest of the place, they were sadly out of order. When we said it was not at all the house we had expected to find from reading the advertisement, we were asked what sort of house we expected to get for 63*l.* with five acres of land? Now that was a question we could not have answered had we not seen the pretty cottage with nearly as much ground at Esher; however, we did not give the owner the benefit of our experience, but merely said that the house would not suit us, and drove back four miles to the station, rather out of spirits with the result of our day's work.

For more than a fortnight did we daily set forth on this voyage of discovery. One day we started with a card to view "a