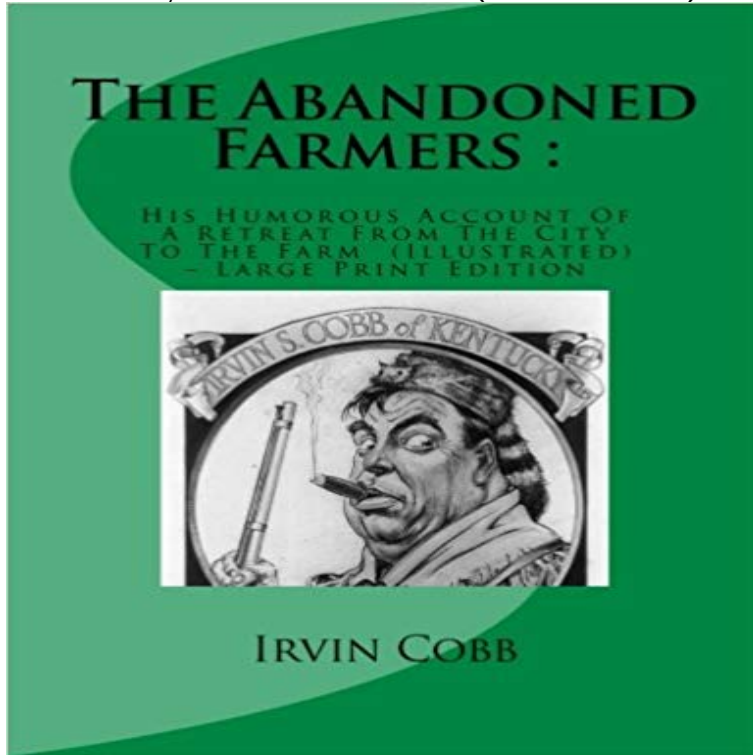


The Abandoned Farmers :: His Humorous Account Of A Retreat From The City To The Farm (Illustrated) - Large Print Edition



It is the inclination of the average reader to skip prefaces. For this I do not in the least blame him. Skipping the preface is one of my favorite literary pursuits. To catch me napping a preface must creep up quietly and take me, as it were, unawares. But in this case sundry prefatory remarks became necessary. It was essential that they should be inserted into this volume in order that certain things might be made plain. The questions were: How and where? After giving the matter considerable thought I decided to slip them in right here, included, as they are, with the body of the text and further disguised by masquerading themselves under a chapter heading, with a view in mind of hoodwinking you into pursuing the course of what briefly I have to say touching on the circumstances attending the production of the main contents. Let me explain: Chapter II, coming immediately after this one, was written first of all; written as an independent contribution to American letters. At the time of writing it I had no thought that out of it, subsequently, would grow material for additional and supplementary offerings upon the same general theme and inter-related themes. It had a basis of verity, as all things in this life properly should have, but I shall not attempt to deny that largely it deals with what more or less is figurative and fanciful. The incident of the finding of the missing will in the ruins of the old mill is a pure figment of the imagination; so, too, the passage relating to the search for the lost heir (Page 55) and the startling outcome of that search. Three years later, actual events in the meantime having sufficiently justified the taking of such steps, I prepared the matter which here is presented in Chapters III, IV and V, inclusive. Intervened then a break of approximately two years more, when the tale was completed substantially in its present form. In all of these latter installments I adhered

closely to facts, merely adding here and there sprinklings of fancy, like dashes of paprika on a stew, in order to give, as I fondly hoped, spice to my recital. One of the prime desires now, in consolidating the entire narrative within these covers, is to round out, from inception to finish, the record of our strange adventures in connection with our quest for an abandoned farm and on our becoming abandoned farmers, trusting that others, following our examples, may perhaps profit in some small degree by our mistakes as here set forth and perhaps ultimately when their dreams have come true, too, share in that proud joy of possession which is ours. Another object, largely altruistic in its nature, is to afford opportunity for the reader, by comparison of the chronological sub-divisions into which the story falls, to decide whether with the passage of time, my style of writing shows a tendency toward improvement or an increasing and enhanced faultiness. Those who feel inclined to write me upon the subject are notified that the author is most sensible in this regard, being ever ready to welcome criticism, provided only the criticism be favorable in tone. Finally there is herewith confessed a third motive, namely, an ambition that a considerable number of persons may see their way clear to buy this book.

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