

**EIGHTEEN YEARS ON
THE SANDRINGHAM
ESTATE**

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Eighteen Years on the Sandringham Estate by Mrs. Gerard Cresswell

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MRS. GERARD CRESSWELL

**EIGHTEEN YEARS ON
THE SANDRINGHAM
ESTATE**

Thos. Morant

EIGHTEEN YEARS

ON THE

SANDRINGHAM ESTATE;

BY

"THE LADY FARMER."

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EIGHTEEN YEARS ON THE SANDRINGHAM ESTATE.



CHAPTER I.

OUR FIRST HOME.

TO those whose experiences are limited to this democratic stage of the nineteenth century, when lords of high degree are embarking in every description of shop keeping under the euphemistic title of joint stock companies; when dukes' sons are to be found in merchants' offices, and cotton lords and successful speculators who have invested in landed estates are no longer ostracised and flouted by the squirearchy as if they belonged to the criminal class, but welcomed as a positive boon to worn-out and poverty-



2 *Eighteen Years on the Sandringham Estate.*

stricken neighbourhoods,—it may seem strange that little more than twenty years ago a lingering superstition existed in the rural districts that very few trades and professions were befitting the younger sons and relations of the country gentry, and that any who ventured out of the groove were spoken of in apologetic tones by the rest of the family, accompanied by expressions of bewilderment and bewonderment at what the world was coming to.

Agriculture, which would appear to be the natural occupation for the country-born and bred, was seldom resorted to. The squire might farm his own lands, but upon the mysterious principle that "you may be genteel and brew, but can't be genteel and bake," to be a tenant upon another man's property was quite another matter, and of the few who made the attempt I never heard of one who succeeded. Everything was against them, both socially and financially. The *bona-fide* farmers possessed an entire monopoly of the hired lands, which they guarded with jealous exclusiveness, considering the competition among themselves quite keen enough without the addition of interlopers; and as there were no agricultural colleges or any means of instruction beyond what could be picked up from those engaged in the pursuit, I am afraid the needful information was not only withheld, but also the unlucky individual often led astray; and what with being taken in by dealers and salesmen,

tricked and pilfered by labourers, misfortunes of mysterious origin happening in all directions, and treated as a spy and intruder by the whole fraternity, his disappearance from the scene was only a question of time, and served as another illustration of the general opinion, that gentlemen never did or would succeed in farming.

Notwithstanding these dismal precedents, upon an engagement to a younger member of one of those old historic families still to be found near the Scottish Borders, who have possessed the same estates and called them after their own names from such remote antiquity, that it would not be surprising if they were one day honoured with a special Act of Parliament for the purpose of dividing their inheritance among their retainers, upon the grounds that they have enjoyed them quite long enough, we felt that with our love of horses, dogs, sport and country life in all its branches, any other existence would be quite unendurable, and not choosing to vegetate upon an inconveniently small income, or sink into that most abject position, the family poor relation and pauper, and hoping that we might prove an exception to the rule of failures, we decided to make farming our future calling and state in life.

And before the advent of ground game, strikes, American competition, depressions, and other plagues of Egypt. I cannot conceive a more pleasant existence