

WHY MEN FARM

By FRANCIS L. SMITH, '27.

A Few Observations Concerning the Age Old Question—Why Men Leave the High Wages of the City for Less Money in the Country.

WHY do men farm? This question seems to be a logical one to students of the depression which followed the war present agricultural situation. The has been felt more strongly by the American farmers than by any other class of people. This depression, which at times has taken on a very serious aspect, has been going on since 1921. Farmers' prices are too low for them to pay their rents, interest, taxes, and current expenses. These costs have not declined in proportion to the decline of agricultural prices. The disparity in prices has spread much discontent among the rural folk. Many farmers are hopelessly in debt, and many others have lost their farms to creditors, and another large group of them are clinging on in the fond hope that times will be better in the future—a hope that is becoming weather worn with age.

The wage earners and professional men in the urban districts are on the high end of the price teeter-totter. Many of the farm boys are leaving their homes in quest of the glittering "sheckles" that seem to evade the farmer. It is estimated that the rural migration to urban centers is about a million a year. And yet, in spite of this dreary outlook, there are still many men engaged in this line of work. This is evidenced by the continuous and ample supply of agricultural commodities.

The reasons for men farming can be conveniently grouped under three heads: economic, psychological, and sociological.

Economic Reasons:

The statement is sometimes made that men farm because they know nothing else. The boy reared on a farm learns many of the arts and operations peculiar to this industry, both on the farm and about the farmstead doing chores, under the supervision of his father. His boyhood days are spent in a sort of apprenticeship, and when the boy grows up he finds that he is better qualified to go into farming than into any other occupation. The idea of having to spend an additional three or four years learning



The country makes the ideal place for landscape gardening.

a trade does not appeal to him when he has already mastered one. This, then, is a strong incentive for farm boys to become farmers. They begin as farm laborers, or tenants, and through a series of years they practice thrift and economy in saving money to purchase a farm.

It should be emphasized that these men do not choose the occupation of their boyhood because of an inferiority complex, or the inability to do something else. They are merely doing the thing which they think will pay them best.

Farming offers a type of security of life not found in other industries. Investment in land is considered the safest kind of an investment. It is tangible, ever-present, and secure. Prices may rise and fall; business may "go to the rocks;" stocks and bonds may become worthless; but the land remains practically the same in physical properties, its producing power unimpaired.

When men choose this occupation, they do it with the expectation of making a long time investment of their money and a life job of their time. The deflation has had its most disastrous effects upon those who bought when prices were inflated.

Their mistake was in purchasing at the wrong time.

Then, too, the farmer is his own employer. His job is secure as long as he can make farming pay. When times are hard, he may lose heavily, but he can at least keep from being poverty-stricken by raising plenty of farm commodities for home consumption.

The farming game may appeal to the young man with great initiative, because a man's greatest handicap is the limitations of his managerial ability. A farm is relatively easy to acquire, compared to other businesses of like proportions.

Another economic aspect of the question is the productivity of the individuals of the family. Farming is the one occupation wherein the whole family, rather than one or two members, aid in making the living. The children can profitably be employed. Most of the American farms are family size, and the majority of the work is done by the farmer and his family.

Psychological Reasons:

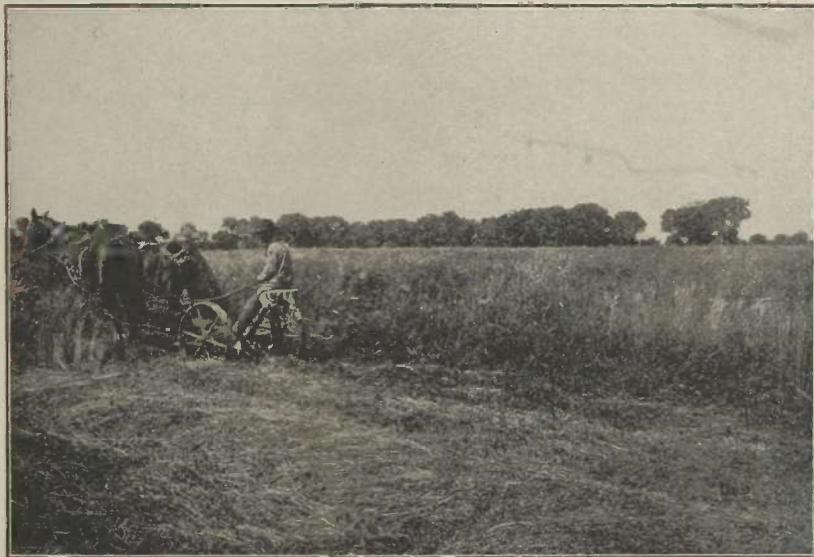
There are other reasons which prompt men to farm. Farming gives a man the opportunity to be his own boss, to use his initiative, to create,

plan, and execute his plans. It offers him a desirable outlet in aesthetic creation by beautifying his home surroundings. It gives an opportunity for those who find nature attractive, to study and appreciate her creations in the plant and animal kingdoms. It satisfies the innate desire of man to acquire property. This may even be expanded into the building up of a perpetual family estate. The old "Home Sweet Home" seems to have a predominating influence on some men's lives—they love to be in the home of their childhood.

Sociological Reasons:

There are some sociological advantages to farming which often lead men to choose this mode of life, or at least keeps them from leaving it when they become discouraged. The family as a social unit is more noticeable in our rural districts. The old home spirit is more manifest because of the nature of the work. The whole family is interested in the same problems, all are more or less acquainted with the situations and are able to participate and cooperate in the family problem more than the city family, where each member follows his own trade or profession. The home is the very center of the farmer's life. This accounts for the early marriages of our rural folk as compared with the urban people. The young farmer's wife is a helpmate as well as a help eat. The farm community usually offers a more ideal place to rear a family. There is productive work which may interest the growing children. The distractions and vices of the city are less apparent in the rural community, which is a decided advantage for the moral development of the young people. It has often been argued that the country is a more healthful place in which to live. The war statistics of the physical conditions of America's young men shows a decided advantage to the city boys. This, however, can be explained by the poor medical and dental care usually given rural children, because of the lack of good doctors in the vicinity.

When a man begins to grow old, he likes to have something to show for his life's efforts, and thus often purchases a farm, and by the time his productiveness is beginning to wane, he has the farm paid for. The ownership of land lends prestige to a man, especially in a farming community.



A good part of the farmer's pleasure comes from working out in the open.

WHAT MAKES IDEAL FARMS?

Frequently we hear mention of "the ideal farm?"

What, we ask, are its attributes?

That depends upon each one's own conception of what farm life should be.

Thinking of farm life generally, the ideal farm would be one that is broadly successful; a farm that yields the farmer and his family a living—full, adequate, complete—liberal in its material rewards, but not lacking in the social, esthetic and ethical values which make for character, contentment and genuine happiness.

All these resources lie latent in the soil—a great storehouse of possibilities, its capacity well-nigh unlimited. It awaits only the hand of the farmer to turn it, to plant the right seed and to nurture the plant. The key which unlocks the wealth of the fields, and brings forth treasures, material and spiritual, is the intelligence of the farmer.—New Jersey Agriculture.

Spots may be removed from clothing by covering the spot thickly on both sides with starch, which is left on for several hours, when it may be removed.

A few stitches of white thread taken through a spot on a woolen garment makes the spot easier to find when the garment is washed.

A garment is kept in shape more easily if always placed on a hanger when not in use.

DAIRYMEN USING FRIGIDAIRE

J. E. Gamalielson, Hilo dairyman and collaborator with the U. S. Experiment Station, is using a Frigidaire machine to keep his milk over night so that it can be delivered with the morning milk, and thus cut out one of the daily milk deliveries. He reports that the evening milk keeps perfectly in this machine and can be delivered the next morning with entire satisfaction to the customers. He proposes to give the consumers the benefit of the saving, reducing the price of milk accordingly.

By University of Hawaii, Extension Service.

She—"Do you think there are divorces in heaven?"

He—"I don't think so. You can't get a divorce without a lawyer, can you?"

Woodman, Woodman, spare that tree,
Touch not a single bough,
For something vicious, chases me,
'Tis the husband of a cow.

Alabama Farmer.

The amount of grain fed to the flock depends upon the appetite and action of the birds. Drowsiness and laziness show signs of overfeeding. Birds are kept slightly hungry during the day and are fed enough to satisfy their hunger in the evening.