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See Harper's Weekly, Oct. 3, 1908

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Sole Proprietors—French's Remedies Ltd., Dublin

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J. H. FRASER, P. M. BREID, AND T. N. WILLING, PROVINCIAL WEED INSPECTOR, REGINA	
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WM. NEWMAN, LORNEVILLE AND MATHEW BRENNAN, FRANCIS, SASKATCHEWAN

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WHAT'S WRONG ON THE FARM?

Roosevelt's commission on country life seems already to have accomplished something in the way of getting at the root reason for not only men and women, but boys and girls especially, being dissatisfied with farm and country life. From the replies of a hundred or more representative farmers of the Central West, in answer to the question "What's Wrong on the Farm?" the reasons back of rural discontent are not hard to discern. Why the boys and girls of the country leave their homes as soon as they come of age, some of them before they are twenty-one, has been a cause for mild wonder among the parents and neighbors of the runaways, but heretofore the cause of the discontent of the young with their surroundings has not been inquired into.

Many farmers say their children left them when they "came of age" and others admit that they have been unable to keep them until they were

that old. Education, it was declared, in practically every case had produced the change, the determination to get into another walk of life. Dozens of farmers say their chief mistake was in not giving their boys a share in the returns, a chance to save a little money so that they might have something to start with at twenty-one.

All these fathers had in mind, certainly, the fact that when they had left the scene of their labors the farm would go to the boys. But this, it was just as certain, did not satisfy the boys. Twenty-two farmers in four counties of central Kansas admitted that they never had allowed their sons to have any pocket-money, and that they had run away between the ages of 14 and 17. Thirty-three farmers lived so far from towns, in fertile parts of Kansas and Oklahoma, that their families had no chance to go to church, the most exciting diversion usually presented, except about once a month, when a circuit preacher came along with a doctrinal discussion or a theological exposition that promptly put them all to sleep. The mother of one family of fifteen had never had time to be lonesome, she said; never had time to read the magazines or the papers that were received regularly; never had time to do anything except work and take care of the babies and go to bed. She was always ready to go to bed, she said, and usually she was tired, especially in harvest time. "But I'm not discontented," she said, in a thin voice. "I'm not lonesome. But the children complain."

Everywhere practically the same reply was heard. "The boys and the girls complain." The spirit of unrest manifested itself, usually, when the children were in high school. It was developed most strongly in the State universities and the colleges. "Until they begin to see how others live away from the farms they're satisfied," a farmer said. "If they get two years in an agricultural college they come home changed, with new notions; they want to put in new ideas of farming; they want all sorts of labor-saving machinery; they want books and papers; they want to quit work at sunset or sooner; they want to go to town every day. We

here. We go to supper now at 6 o'clock and do the chores afterward. In that way the women can clear up things by 7 o'clock. For many years we didn't get our chores done until 9 o'clock, and often it was an hour later. We'd work in the fields till the last minute and that kept supper waiting. I've seen the time, often, when we didn't eat till nearly 9 o'clock. That was what drove the girl away. Two of my boys left me, too, but I caught them at Chicago, and they came back on the promise of an allowance. I'd never let them have any money. I made an agreement with them, and now they share in the profits after the home expenses are paid."

Agricultural colleges and farmers' institutes are exerting a very important influence in making farm life more attractive for boys and girls. In the first they learn, or should learn, new methods of farming all tending to increased yield and less labor by the application of intelligence. The girls get competent instruction in domestic science and are trained to think of farming and farm life as desirable and dignified.

The telephone, the rural free delivery of mail and other innovations have done much to improve farm-life conditions, but the desired point is far distant in many communities. Farmers have kept their families in poorly constructed houses that have no conveniences; they have isolated them from their fellows; they have worked them too hard; then the boys go to the cities to be mechanics or clerks or doctors, the girls study to be teachers or stenographers or clerks. Their early environments have been such that they do not care to marry farmers, for that, as a farm girl said, would be stepping from the frying pan into the fire.

In several farm families daughters returning from high schools or colleges or state universities have taken over the management of the household until they have taught mothers the importance of system. Boys or young men have done the same for their fathers, with the result that life is made easier and pleasanter on the farm. "I see no reason to conduct farming differently from any other business," said one young graduate from a farming institute.



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either have to give them what they want or they leave. Young folks are not what they used to be.

"Doesn't that apply chiefly to the boys?" was suggested. "Have you found any labor-saving devices to help the women in their work?"

"No," he admitted. "I guess they're doing their work about as they always did it. I believe that much of the trouble is caused on farms by the lack of proper system, too many hours of labor. After one of my girls ran away and became a stenographer we put in a schedule

"Farming in the future is to be a business and not a drudgery for men and women. There's no reason for working eighteen hours a day on a farm unless the weather threatens the hay or something else that has been cut and is on the ground. It's all foolishness to get up at 4 o'clock and work till 10 at night. No other class on earth does it. Work in the fields should begin at 7 o'clock and cease at 6. A farmer owes that much consideration to his horses or mules. Certainly his wife ought to stand an equal show with the brutes.

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