

Stock.

A Chatty Letter from the States.

[From our Chicago Correspondent.]

For the year thus far the amount of stock marketed has not in the aggregate been as large as during the corresponding six months last year. The shortage is largely in cattle, but mostly in sheep. By the end of the year, however, this matter may be reversed.

There was never a better summer demand for hogs. Nearly all of the packers have been buying almost as freely as in winter. Canadian packers continue to use a large number of lean light hogs from Chicago.

The abundance of the corn in the country and the good health of the hogs tend to make farmers fatten their swine too much this year. There is a demand for more lean and less fat in hogs.

The severe drouth in the Southwest, Texas particularly, during May and the first half of June, delayed the shipments of range beefs several weeks, and worse than that, if the most reliable reports were correct, many thousands of cattle perished for want of food and water. The famished animals would linger about the dried-up water holes until they were too emaciated to hunt for grass. Since about the middle of June grateful showers have gladdened the hearts of stockmen and put an end to one of the worst spring drouths ever experienced. Rains have been badly needed in the range country of the Northwest, and the shipping season is almost sure to be a couple of weeks late.

Good solid cattle, that is, good corn-fed or dry-fed cattle, have for many weeks been very scarce and have been selling better than one year ago. On the other hand, store cattle and all kinds below choice fat bullocks, have been selling 25 @ 50c. cheaper than in June, 1885.

For a couple of months past, dealers have seemed to feel convinced that ripe fat beefs were scarce and bound to command a premium.

Chicago has sent forward a great many 1,300 @ 1,500 lb. cattle of late to Great Britain at about \$5.25 @ \$5.50, though exporters have paid as high as \$5.85. As a rule the highest prices have been paid by butchers of Eastern cities, who have regular, high toned customers for the best beef. For instance, when London and Liverpool buyers were paying \$5.50 @ \$5.75, at Chicago, Alleghany and New York buyers were paying as high as \$6.00 for fancy young beefs. The highest priced cattle have been those averaging less than 1,500 lbs. Heavier cattle have been marketed with some freedom, but there are not now many buyers who care to handle beefs averaging 1,600 @ 1,800 lbs.

It is learned upon pretty good authority that dairy calves in the eastern part of the U. S. will be more plentiful than in former years, of poorer quality and are likely to sell lower. It is said that the low prices for butter and cheese have been the cause of dairy farmers in the East raising more calves than usual. As no particular care has been taken of them, they are not as well grown as usual, and are not in very good condition for growing into beef. The chances are that Western buyers will be somewhat more discriminating than in former years. A lot of good Michigan calves lately sold here at \$14 per head.

Among Western ranchmen both North and South, the idea of spaying heifers to check over-stocked ranges from going to ruin, is growing in favor. The Standard Cattle Co., one of the best known in the West, has recently contracted with somebody to spay 2,000 heifers.

In many localities all over the West, the native grasses are being spoiled, perhaps forever, by being grazed too closely. Many sections which in years gone by could be depended upon to grow the best beefs, are now among the poorest ranges. The question of a practical substitute for these native grasses when they are exhausted, is a serious one. The mosquito, bunch and sedge grasses will in time have to be replaced by more durable kinds. What they shall be no one has yet learned.

Hay feeding on Western ranges is becoming very popular, and it is very profitable where properly conducted. The time is not so very far distant when leaving cattle to *rustle, cow, or die*, without stores of food or shelter from the elements, will be too unprofitable to be popular. Slowly but surely the free grass idea must give way to humaner methods. After awhile every stock raiser will own or lease his land, and then the business will be on a more substantial basis.

Thin, grass Texas cattle, the first of the season, sold \$1 per cwt. lower this year than last, as the drouth caused many very thin and utterly unmerchable cattle to be sent to market. Since then the quality of the Southwestern range cattle has improved.

A number of the Western papers have lately been wrangling over the statement made by one of them, that no Shorthorn on earth is worth \$3,250, the price of one of the Duchess cows at the May sales at Dexter Park, Chicago. The paper which made the statement defends it by calling attention to the fact that such prices are never paid except by men who made their money at something else besides Shorthorn raising.

The sheep market during the past month has been on the up-grade. The granting of lower freight rates to Texas sheep men tended to flood the market for awhile, but the demand for good muttons has lately more than equaled the supplies.

Brown vs. Brown on the "Baby-Beef" Boom.

Prof. Brown, the distinguished English veterinary surgeon, chief of the agricultural department, and adviser of the Royal Agricultural, has recently written a handbook on the subject of animal life, in which he makes a sweeping indictment against "baby beef" and the modern high pressure system of feeding. It is well known that Prof. Brown, of the Ontario Model Farm, is a pronounced advocate of the system. The question may suggest itself to the minds of our farmers, Which of these Browns is the ablest authority on the subject of animal life? Our professor has many ardent admirers, and it is unlikely that any English or other authority will have sufficient weight to lower him in their estimation. We at once see this distinction, that the English Brown is Professor by education and instinct; our Brown is "Prof." by appointment.

The above named handbook has created quite a commotion in live stock circles. The work

is pregnant with cogent thoughts, but we have only space for a brief review.

The learned Professor asserts the existence of nature's law, "The survival of the fittest," but under domestication, he says, the tendency is towards the survival of the unfittest. By our artificial system, we have produced weakened constitutions and degeneracy in our stock, with a tendency to tubercular deposits. Constitutional diseases have been initiated by breeding from young animals, and by subjecting them to close quarters. Having condemned prize shows and the practice of making such a quality of beef as the people cannot eat, the Professor goes on to say:

"It is not easy, and it is the reverse of satisfactory, to have to admit that in the course of long years of steady effort we have been willfully groping in the dark. But the sooner we get a glimpse of the fact the less difficult it will be to retrace our steps; and there is no escape from the conclusion that, if we mean to cultivate the live stock of the farm, we shall have to proceed in a direction as nearly as possible, in some respects at least, opposite to the one which we have taken for many years. * * * If it were not the case that the system has become fashionable, and animals of favorite strains command a high but utterly fictitious price in the market, it would not stand for a day. Does any man with the average share of common sense entertain a doubt that the whole scheme of breeding for early maturity would undergo a radical change if breeders were suddenly to become impressed with the necessity of producing a hardy, healthy race of animals which would afford healthy and substantial food for man."

The book is written in this strain, but we think this paragraph is as much as our Prof. Brown and his admirers can stomach for the present. The author then proceeds to say that baby-flesh is not flesh at all; he thinks that mankind should have something worth biting at, and he regards "baby-beef" as the reverse of something to bite at. The objection, he says, that the breeder cannot afford to wait long enough to get mature beef, has nothing to do with the physiologist's view of the matter, and if the breeder decides that he cannot afford to do what is right, he must suffer the consequences. The writer regards the completion of permanent dentition as a fair test of maturity, which is three years of age for cattle and sheep, and eighteen months for swine.

Contemporary with these sweeping charges, we find Prof. Sanborn, of the Missouri Agricultural College, demonstrating to the farmers of his State how he can feed hogs for lean meat; that is, by a change in the system of feeding, giving more nitrogenous and less carbonaceous foods, he can change diseased blubber into wholesome and healthy muscle. There is no doubt that the existing American system of breeding and feeding swine for a tendency to the rapid accumulation of fat has been the cause of so much disease amongst this class of domestic animals. In cows the irrational system of feeding has brought on milk-fever and abortion, as well as tuberculosis, although the latter disease has been more prevalent amongst fattening animals—all for the promotion of veterinary science.

The policy of the *Advocate* on the "baby-beef" boom is well known to our readers. When we first raised our voice against the craze, we were denounced as being crazy. We stood entirely alone in our efforts to cure the fat-stock show mania, but the speculators and