

A Chatty Letter from the States.

[FROM OUR CHICAGO CORRESPONDENT.]

The question of questions that is up for solution now is: Shall the stockmen encourage or discourage the further development of the dressed meat traffic?

As many of the ADVOCATE readers may be aware, the pool lines of railways leading from Chicago to the east have lately advanced the freight rates on live stock and dressed meats, and have made a heavy discrimination against the latter. For instance, the rate on live cattle has been raised from 25 to 35 cents per cwt., while on dressed beef the advance has been from 43½ to 65 cents. On dressed mutton the discrimination was much worse, the new rate being 90 cents, or exactly double what it used to be. Just why there should be such discrimination against sheep is more than any reasonable person can understand, unless it is on the theory that the railroads feel that they have a right to charge "all the traffic will bear." It looks as if the railroads had an especial grudge against the sheep industry, as in the west they refuse to haul muttons in double deck cars, while in the east they refuse to haul dressed mutton for less than one-third more than they charge for hauling dressed beef.

Since this last fight between the live stock shippers and the dressed meat shippers has come on, there has been aroused a good deal of bitter opposition to the dressed meat industry on the ground that it is rapidly drifting into a dangerous monopoly.

At the rate the trade has grown in the past three or four years, it would only require about five years more to have it entirely supersede the old system of shipping on the hoof.

It is being claimed that the meat men are not only underselling the local butchers at all competitive points, but that by the immensity of their operations they are in a large measure able to control the great live stock traffic of the west, putting prices up or down at will. The fact that prices the past season have been very low has been used against them, and of course the butchers and cattle shippers all over the country are doing all they possibly can to crush their formidable rival.

Canada and Great Britain might be benefited if the American railways should so advance freight rates as to increase the cost of States stock, but that fact can cut no figure in considering the justice of allowing the railways to levy a sufficient tax upon an improved method to put it back on a par with an old style of operation. In other words, have the railways the right to charge more than a fair profit for hauling dressed meat simply because the dressed meat trade yields larger profits to the owner than does the live cattle trade?

Doubtless this matter will have to be settled in Congress, as interested parties, neither the railroads, the meat men nor the cattle shippers are qualified to say what is right in the premises.

Lately a very few good to choice 1,000 to 1,200 lb. young cattle have sold here to go to Ohio and Virginia feeders at about \$4.40 to \$4.65, but the volume of business going that way is nothing now in comparison to what it was in former years.

Feeding cattle in the east has lately been very unprofitable, and many are inclined to lay

the blame at the door of the Chicago dressed beef concerns, who send out train loads of cheap western beef every day to be peddled out all along the lines of railway wherever customers can be found.

There was a lot of 1,182 lb. Illinois cattle came to market lately. The feeder, who had never sheltered or protected them, had fed a great deal of corn, and was under the impression that if the cattle were not fat they ought to be; he had fed them enough corn to make them fat, and was just a little inclined to feel proud of his job. He sent them to a market for fat cattle, but an Ohio feeder paid more for them than could be realized from the butchers. The owner had given his cattle corn enough to make them fat, but he had failed to supply the requisite allowance of pine boards or other kinds of shelter.

The outlook for spring sales of live stock is fairly encouraging. Breeders have not been expecting anything very extravagant in the way of prices, and that fact may tend to make the trade more healthy this year than last. One year ago breeders were expecting a good deal and were disappointed because they got very little. But now they are better prepared to take matters as they come, and thus for that reason there is a better undertone in the trade.

Shorthorn Herd Book Frauds.

We attended the meeting of the executive committee of the Dominion Shorthorn Herd Book Association, held in the city of Toronto on the 11th ult. It will be remembered that the Canada and British American Shorthorn Herd Books recently amalgamated under the name and style of the Dominion Shorthorn Herd Book Association, the committee consisting of six members of the Agricultural and Arts Association and sixteen members of the late British American Shorthorn Herd Book Association.

The meeting occupied itself in discussing pedigrees of doubtful purity for registration in the new book, the standard being that all animals recorded must be imported stock or the descendants thereof. The American Shorthorn Herd Book was first criticised and denounced, it being stated that this book contained "fashionable" and "unfashionable" pedigrees, the latter being spurious. This fact should be distinctly borne in mind; for both of our recently amalgamated Herd Books accepted American registrations, and must therefore also contain the names of animals of impure blood. A prominent member of the committee stated that in former times it was an easy matter to clap a tail to a pedigree in order to make the animal eligible for registration in the American Herd Book.

When the Dominion Association passed the resolution adopting the new standard, none of them knew who was going to be hurt; but when some of the members found out that the pedigrees of some of their most valuable animals could not be traced to imported stock, and consequently ineligible for registration, some loud squealing was audible. Mr. McQueen, one of the sufferers, denounced the Association as a ring who wanted to monopolize the whole Shorthorn business. The Secretary of the new book, Mr. Henry Wade, suggested that the breeder should get the benefit of the doubt in cases where the importation of the

ancestor could not be distinctly traced. Mr. Parker thought the preponderance of evidence should weigh, taking into consideration the character of the parties who gave their evidence. Mr. John Dryden, M. P. P., President of the Dominion Association, declared that the committee had no power in the matter; it must "hew to the line," and carry out the instructions of the Association.

The chief trouble was with the bull "Roger," it being doubtful whether he could be traced to the Kentucky importation of 1817. It was said that this bull was a "wonderful getter" and should therefore be eligible for registration; but it was held that this quality had nothing whatever to do with the standard, and that the committee must adhere strictly to the rules laid down by the Association. Thousands of the best animals in the land will be ruled out on account of this one doubtful pedigree alone, and some magnificent herds will be almost entirely obliterated.

Mr. Gordon told a doleful yarn which struck terror and remorse into the breeders who registered their stock in the late British American Herd Book. He said they were a poor, struggling society of breeders, that they lacked funds and were thus driven to accept the numbers in the American Shorthorn Herd Book, that they lacked means to purify their book; that their editor, Mr. Denison, intended to scrutinize the pedigrees, but had only got so far as to eliminate the fictitious pedigrees of Canadian farmers, but he intended also to scratch out the spurious American numbers when he got time. These remarks brought President Dryden to his feet, who said he felt ashamed and disgusted with the British American Shorthorn Herd Book, and often felt in his conscience as if he should reveal something with regard to it. If this is the plight of the British American Book, what must be said about the Government concern? The former had a good standard, but the breeders did not live up to it; the latter had a low standard and accepted spurious registrations as well. The fact of the matter is, both Associations would register almost anything for the sake of the paltry but almighty dollar.

These unsuspected revelations struck consternation into the meeting, and all sorts of trouble was anticipated. A rival herd book was feared. It may here also be mentioned by way of parenthesis that the Model Farm is also talking about starting a new herd book.

The doubtful pedigrees have been left over for future consideration; but meanwhile who will be able to put a price on these animals? We venture to predict that if the injured breeders are very persistent and threaten to establish a new book, evidence will not be wanting to prove that their animals can be traced to imported stock.

But we have not yet mentioned the worst feature of the whole affair. In the meeting of the council of the Agricultural and Arts Association, which had just closed its session, they could not decide what standard they should adopt in the awarding of prizes at the coming Provincial Exhibition. Some members were in favor of admitting animals into the show ring which were registered in any one of the two books recently amalgamated, while others held that the Dominion Shorthorn Herd Book should be the standard. We should like to