

A Revolution in the Mode of Supplying Meat Consumers.

[FROM OUR CHICAGO CORRESPONDENT.]

Unmistakable signs of the times point to a revolution in the mode of transporting meat from distributing centres to consumers.

Only a few years ago hog packing was confined almost exclusively to the winter months, but improved methods, first, the free use of natural ice, and latterly the generation of cold air by artificial means, have enabled pork packers to operate with heavy, fat grunTERS as well in July as January. So it has been with the growth and development of the dressed beef business. A score of years since it was a regular business at Chicago to send dressed beef from there to other cities, east and west, during cold weather, which would preserve the dead stock until its journey's end was reached. It was then a common thing for the meat to freeze so hard in transportation that its quality was deteriorated, and, of course, with the coming of spring weather, this method of supplying meat consumers had to be abandoned. Art again came to the rescue, and, finding a demand, proceeded to supply it. Refrigerator cars were introduced, and, by successive improvements, have been made to reach a degree of perfection which enables the dressed beef operator to land his wares during any month of the year at any distance from the starting point in vastly superior condition to the meat of animals shipped on foot the same distance. The business has been growing so rapidly within the past few years, and is just now meeting with such pronounced success, that handlers of live stock, between the western distributing centres and the eastern consuming markets, are greatly exercised, and, of course, are trotting out all the "stumbling blocks" they can place in the way of that method. Every great reform meets with bitter opposition from those who see in it a blow at their pecuniary interests, and it would be strange if this "new departure" did not meet with opposing elements. For a few years the New England States have been supplied with refrigerator beef, but the trade created no great commotion until the New York market was invaded a few weeks since by Chicago dressed beef. The butchers then made an "able-bodied howl," but as they could not afford to dress and sell the same quality of beef within 2c. per lb. of the price at which the refrigerator article afforded a profit, their howls can be of little avail.

The railroads, to a large extent, are hostile to the dressed meat system, as but half as many cars are required for carcasses as for live animals, and they of course favor the method which gives them the greatest amount of business. Stock yard interests naturally fight the system, but perhaps the most bitter enemies are those engaged in shipping live stock to, and handling it at, the markets where dressed meats now claim a share of the people's patronage.

A strong argument in favor of the system is the indisputable fact, that beef which travels one thousand miles in an even temperature after being slaughtered, is far more wholesome than meat from an animal which has been shipped alive that distance, and butchered before the soreness incident to such a trip is gone.

It is claimed that the horns, hides and offal are worth more in Chicago than New York; hence the folly of shipping them such a distance. From a humanitarian standpoint, the dressed beef system is incomparably better than the old way, for the animals are saved indescribable tortures by being slaughtered nearer the grazing grounds or feed lots. Then, again, there is an immense saving in shrinkage, feed bills, yard charges, loss by death, and being crippled, etc.

In short, the nearer the animals are slaughtered to their original pastures, the better it is for all hands. It may require many years to make a complete revolution in this business, but the dressed beef trade is certainly enjoying a "boom" similar to the one which Polled cattle created, and are still keeping up.

Polled Cattle Sales in Scotland—Extraordinary Prices.

[BY OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.]

Events of great importance to breeders and owners of Polled-Aberdeen or Angus cattle on both sides of the Atlantic, have taken place in Scotland within the last three weeks. I refer to the public sales of Polled cattle at Fintray, Montbletton, Advie Mains and Cortachy Castle. These sales were looked forward to with great interest, and drew together larger and better companies than were ever seen in this country at any former sales of a similar kind. Canada was well represented, and, as the sequel will show, secured a large share of the "cracks" of the various herds, Mr. Wilken, Waterside-of-Forbes, having made several most valuable purchases for the Hon. W. H. Cochrane, Hillhurst, and the Hon. J. H. Pope, Minister of Agriculture. The quality and breeding of the stock brought under the hammer were, undoubtedly, superior, but the prices far exceeded the calculations and expectations of everybody. In consequence of the keen demand for Polled cattle which exists in America, the interest in the "blackskins" in this country has quickened, and our home farmers who, a short time ago would have grudged to give more than fifty or sixty guineas for an animal of this breed, are now bidding their hundreds, two hundreds and three hundreds, as freely as ever they offered their fifties or sixties. The excitement at the sales ran high, especially when some representative of the Erica, Pride, Mayflower or Rose family was brought into the ring. The question is being frequently asked, how long will the present demand and high prices of Polled cattle continue? In the first instance there is no doubt it is the demand for Polled cattle in America that has raised the prices, as there is a comparatively small number of Polled cattle in this country; breeders, in view of the large drafts that have gone across the Atlantic, have had, as it were in self-defence, to increase the prices so as to prevent their herds from being completely exhausted. The high prices, however, have but stimulated the demand, and almost every day one reads in the newspapers of "more Polled cattle for America." How long is the demand likely to continue? Some people say prices have reached their flood-mark, others that they are yet bound to get higher. Rightly taking advantage of their opportunities, breeders may, in the meantime at any rate, reap a rich harvest, but in the midst of the present excitement they would do well to bear certain things in mind—that the number of Polled cattle is but small, and that if all the "plums" of their herds are bought up for America, the breed ultimately will, in its native home, become impoverished. Breeders will make every effort they can to meet the demand which has risen for their stock, and will gradually be brought to the necessity of breeding from animals of a mediocre, or even worse than a mediocre, description. Under such a system no improvement can be expected, and there may indeed be some danger of the breed failing to maintain its former reputation. In times of low prices farmers can afford to market all but the very tops of their cattle which are retained for breeding purposes. In this way a breed may be improved, and it is well that breeders at the recent sales seemed to be alive to the necessity of retaining some of the best specimens at home.

On Wednesday, 27th Sept., the entire herd of Polled cattle belonging to Sir Wm. Forbes, Bart., of Fintray, was exposed for sale in Aberdeen. The herd, which numbered twenty-one head, realized an average of £48, the highest price being 100 gs., which Mr. Waker paid for a two-year-old heifer named "Flower of the Nile," bred at Rothiemay, which was taken out for Hon. Mr. Pope. This herd was founded only a few years ago, and has scarcely had time to make itself a name in the country.

On the following day a large company assembled at Montbletton, near Banff, to witness the dispersion of the fine old herd of Polled cattle—it was started more than half a century ago—belonging to the representatives of the late Mr. Robert Walker. The principal family in the herd were the Mayflowers, from which sprang the Blackbirds—one of the best of which, Blackbird II., is now at Hillhurst—and the Lady Idas, both of which strains have produced noted prize-winners. The sale took everybody by surprise, the 40 animals sold bringing the hitherto unprecedented average of £97 15s. 7d. Major Gordon A. Doff, of Hatton, who presided at the luncheon, advised breeders in this country to keep the "plums" at home, but he could hardly have been satisfied with their destination, for the cream of the herd was purchased by Mr. Wilken, for Hon. M. H. Cochrane. Mr. Wilken bought five animals for this gentleman for the handsome sum of 1,000 guineas. This magnificent lot includes the highest priced animal at the sale—a massive, grandly-fleshed, six-year-old cow, named Lady Ida II., which was knocked out at 315 guineas—the highest figure which, up to this time, had ever been paid for a Polled animal. The cows were an uncommonly grand lot; as a rule strong, massive, heavily-fleshed animals, with great, springing ribs, and showing a distinct family likeness, the mark of the septemate breeding that was followed at Montbletton. The following is a summary of the sale:

	AVERAGE.	TOTAL.
15 cows.....	£128 2s.	£1,921 10s
6 two-year-old heifers...	105 10s. 6d.	633 3s
5 one-year-old "	71 3s. 9d.	355 19s
2 heifer calves.....	82 19s.	165 18s
2 bulls.....	176 18s. 6d.	353 17s
10 bull calves.....	48 1s. 9d.	480 18s
40	£97 15s. 7d	£3,911 5s

The average realized for the Mains of Advie herd, which was founded about twenty years ago, by the purchase of Old Rose of Advie, from Sir George Macpherson Grant, Bt., of Ballindalloch, and which was dispersed on Tuesday, 3rd October, at their highland home in Strathspey, was not so high as the Montbletton average by about £9. Still, the sale in every respect was a great success. The Roses were the best family, and were eagerly sought after. The herd which belonged to the representatives of the late Mr. Charles Grant, contained a large infusion of Ballindalloch-Erica blood, through the use of such sires as Elcho, Whig, Etonian, &c. The Mains of Advie cattle have for many years taken a leading position in the local shows, being distinguished for their robustness of constitution, wealth of flesh, grand quality and true breeding. The cows and heifer-calves in particular were a grand lot. Mr. Wilken purchased the highest priced animal—Mayflower 4th—a five-year-old of the Rose family, after the famed stock-bull Elcho, the price being 235 guineas. The following summary will show the character of the stock and sale:

	AVERAGE.	TOTAL.
14 cows.....	£118 17s 6d.	£1,664 5s 0d
4 two-year-old heifers	79 0s 3d.	316 1s 8d
9 one-year-old "	78 3s 4d.	703 10s 0d
12 heifer calves.....	66 17s 0d.	802 4s 0d
1 aged bull.....		147 0s 0d
2 bull-calves.....	34 3s 0d.	68 6s 0d
42	£88 3s. 0d.	£3,702 6s. 8d

Two days after, on Thursday, 5th, nearly two-thirds of the fine herd founded by Lord Airlie, whose sudden death in America, a short time ago, was so much regretted by his countrymen, were sold by auction, at Cortachy Castle, Forfarshire. Some four hundred breeders attended, and, high as the averages and individual prices at Montbletton and Advie Mains were, they were far surpassed here. Fifty-seven animals realized the unparalleled average of £108 11s. 5d., while the highest individual price was 500 guineas. This is the largest price ever paid for any animal of this breed, either at public or private sale. The animal that fetched this extraordinary figure was a four-year-old cow named Emerald of Airlie, a member of the far-famed Ballindalloch-Erica family, four of which (two cows, a one-year-old heifer and a six-months-old heifer calf) realized an average of £388 10s. Emerald of Airlie was purchased by Mr. O. Wallis, Bradley Hall, Northumberland; Mr. Wilken secured the one-year-old heifer referred to—a very sweet, evenly-fleshed youngster—for Hon. Mr. Cochrane, at 380 guineas. Sybil Ist., of Tillyfour, a member of the Sybil