

A Great American Industry

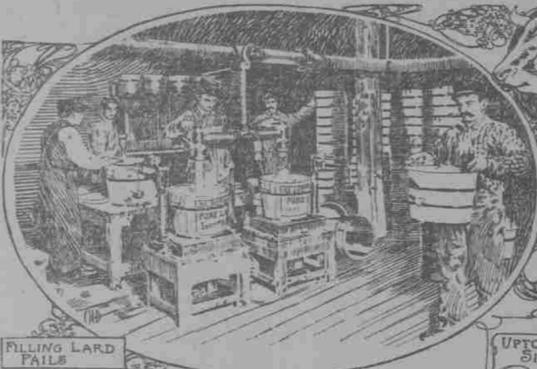
Some of the Less Discussed Facts Concerning the Meat Packing Business, One of the Country's Foremost Specialties

THE greatest institution of its kind in the world, and certainly the most noteworthy institution of any kind in Chicago, is the industry which has been developed by the live stock and meat packing interests. As now carried on at the Union stockyards the live stock trade and the packing business are really distinct, but they are of necessity correlated and interdependent. The Union stockyards proper consists of about 500 acres of pens, buildings and facilities for receiving, handling, feeding, watering, selling, weighing and delivering from 25,000 to 120,000 or more animals a day, this being the approximate record of actual receipts. The packing house district, familiarly known as "packingtown," comprises almost equal territory, covered with huge brick buildings devoted to the slaughter of animals and their conversion into "raw materials" for finished commercial products.

This is the point on the American continent to which the country's live stock world has recently been directed by Upton Sinclair's novel, "The Jungle," and by the outcome of an investigation into the business methods of those who have profited greatly from the meat packing industry. There has been of late a public awakening to the evils of impure foods and adulterations of all kinds. The great array of food containers has at last begun to take an active interest in what it eats and drinks. It will no longer consent to be put off with commodities attractive in appearance but injurious in composition. Dairy packages and high art embellishment are no longer sufficient, specimens literature and plausible statements coming from the markets of all these articles of unknown composition are received with suspicion. To put it somewhat vulgarly, "the name is in the game." At present it seems to be the meat packers who have most cause to fear from this determination on the part of the American public. Their day of reckoning has long been delayed, but the most optimistic of them all cannot fail to recognize that it has come. The public understands now why Upton Sinclair's challenge to the meat packers to bring an action for libel was not accepted. It is known today that the truth of Mr. Sinclair's charges may be substantiated easily.

Forty years ago no American city had a centralized stock market of any considerable proportions. Chicago was then little more than an overgrown village, with a population of less than 150,000. The entire population of the state of Illinois was less than that of Chicago at the present time. The massing of 2,000,000 men in the field during the civil war had already demonstrated that this rapidly growing town on Lake Michigan was the most available point in the Mississippi valley region for concentrating enormous food stores for the use of the army at the front. The citizens of the ambitious town not only knew this, but were quick to grasp the opportunity to make their city the foremost live stock market of the world.

Vast and far reaching consequences have grown out of this establishment. In 1888, at the first centralized live stock market at Chicago, in a short time the railroads were aroused to the importance of the traffic and at once became active solicitors for the new market. The certain prospect of constant outlet at all seasons of the year for all kinds of live stock and in any quantity at fair cash value on the day of arrival was a potent stimulant, and it increased the production marvellously.



FILLING LARD PAILS



UPTON SINCLAIR



WRAPPING BUTTERINE

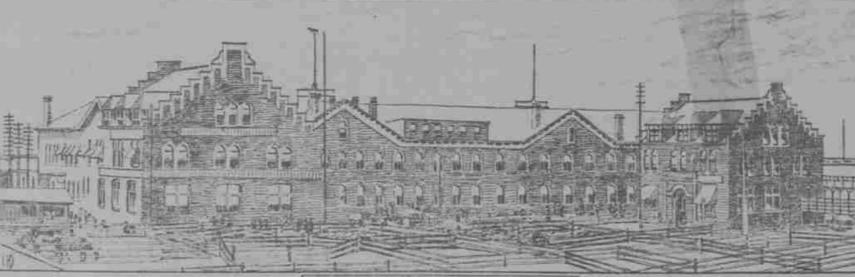
Not only was this increase manifest in the immediate vicinity of Chicago, but the ranges of the great plains began to teem with herds and flocks. This was followed by the most rapid extension of railroad systems ever known. This extensive concentration of live stock in a great centralized market, with transportation facilities reaching to every part of the nation, made possible the development of the modern packing plant. From the first it has been a fascinating proposition. The wonderful economy in the preparation and handling of meats and complete utilization of the offal appealed strongly to those who looked into the matter from a commercial standpoint. It was so successful that in a very short time the old wasteful system which depended on the village slaughter house was driven practically out of existence. In spite of its long duration there is probably no other large business in America that is so little understood by the public at large. There are really three interests concerned, each of distinct importance—the Union Stock Yards and Transit company, the commission men who belong to the Live



A SAUSAGE DRYING ROOM



PULLING WOOL



CHICAGO LIVE STOCK EXCHANGE

Stock Exchange and the packing house companies. The Union Stockyard and Transit company is owned by eastern capitalists who have no interest in the packing industry. This company owns the yards and all of the property used as a public market. It derives its income from yardage charges, as also from the rental of a large office building and other property used for private purposes. It supplies feed and employs yardmen to unload and care for stock and owns the scales and furnishes men to weigh all live stock sold.

Since this company does not deal in live stock its business is limited to maintaining a great public market to which any farmer or stock raiser may come and sell his product to any one he wishes. Here, also, may be found the buyers for the packing houses and local butchers and those engaged in the export trade. The farmer may act as his own salesman if he wishes, but it is the almost universal custom to employ commission men. It is supposed that they will be able to secure better prices on account of their intimate acquaintance with the market.

This commission business has assumed extensive proportions. At the present time there are about 200 commission firms at the yards. Some of them make a specialty of buying for the export trade, but most of them act as agents for farmers in the sale of live stock. The rules under which they do business are made and enforced by the Live Stock Exchange, and there is little opportunity for unfair dealing. The exchange itself is a most dignified concern. It has about 700 members

altogether, comprising live stock producers, shippers, packers, commission men and brokers, organized not so much for profit as for the protection of mutual interests. This is the association which should have made such a revelation as "The Jungle" and the report of President Roosevelt's investigators impossible. One of its most conspicuous duties is to secure adequate inspection of animals and meats. In this it seems to have failed miserably. Another special function of the exchange is to secure legislation for the protection of live stock interests. This it seems to have made an effort to do and to have succeeded admirably.

This Live Stock Exchange has always borne an excellent reputation. Its members are for the most part men who stand high in the community, and there have been surprisingly few scandals in connection with these body. Transactions at the yards are always conducted in a singularly upright and satisfactory manner, any attempt at sharp practice being dealt with in a summary manner by the exchange. It is perhaps the only market in the world in which business amounting to millions of dollars daily is done without a written record of each transaction. This of itself shows that the yards are not a safe shelter for men of devious business ways. The scale of commissions is fixed by the exchange on a fair basis, so that the income of each commission man is

determined by the amount of business he can obtain—by the number of farmers and country shippers whose good will and patronage he can retain by efficient and faithful service. Half of the cattle received at the yards are shipped by the farmers without the intervention of middlemen. The shipper usually comes alone in person.

While it is true that some of the packers are members of the exchange, their representation is very small compared with the number of persons and firms representing the sellers of live stock. Realizing its responsibility to the public, the exchange has always made a great point of its power and willingness to maintain a keen oversight of the enormous traffic done at the yards and the equally important business going on in packingtown. It has always made a great feature of the system of government inspection which has been in force, of which it is the responsible cause. Until the recent disclosures neither the efficiency of this service nor the ability of the exchange has been called in question. This arrangement, so satisfactory, apparently, to the meat packers, to the exchange and to the government inspectors, might have continued indefinitely if a young man in search of literary stimulus had not taken it into his head to study the matter at close range. He took up his abode in the packing house district and went about with his eyes open. What he saw

made them open "wider and more widely still." Then followed "The Jungle" which is a "novel" with a purpose. If ever there was such a thing, it is Zolaesque in its realism and not agreeable reading, but it bears the impress of truth. If it had gone the way of most novels by comparatively unknown writers, the Live Stock Exchange and the packers would have been spared much inquietude.

But it was read. The American public read it and believed it. Suspicion concerning the methods of the meat barons had long been entertained in various quarters, and the revelations of "The Jungle" made it certain that the country shuddered and experienced a universal nausea. Among those who read the book was Theodore Roosevelt. His rugged frankness appealed to the president and he made up his mind to satisfy himself whether or not its charges were true. With his alertness and quick initiative that he has learned to expect of him he sent experts with a commission to learn the worst, the very worst.

What that worst proved to be is all set to the purpose of this article. It is sufficient to say that the commission established beyond question that the Live Stock Exchange had overestimated most unaccountably its ability to regulate the business methods of the meat packers. This body of self constituted champions of the public interests actually knew less of the unbusinesslike doings that were going on in the packers' establishments than did the general public.

Most startling of all was the discovery by the president's advisers that the government's million dollar a year inspection service was the most pitiful sort of failure. Instead of making a check upon the reprehensible practices of the packers, it served to assist them in their policy of concealment and disregard for decency. It gave them the opportunity to insist that all their work was conducted under government supervision and that nothing detrimental to the public interest could be done. With both United States inspectors and those appointed by the state of Illinois in constant attendance at the yards and with a heavy fine prescribed for any commission man who should sell an unfit animal, the packers and manufacturers of byproducts might pose as the ideals of industrial virtue.

Having satisfied themselves of the purity of the existing provisions for inspection, it did not take long for the president and his friends in congress to set on foot a movement looking to the betterment of the situation. A bill was framed and introduced into the upper house by Senator Beveridge of Indiana which completely reverses the government's policy of meat inspection.

Strange as it must appear, the meat packers have availed themselves in the face of comparative virtue. Without attempting either to deny the charges made against them or to justify their conduct they declare that among all such offenders they are the least; that their sins against the gustatory apparatus of the American public are as nothing compared with those of a dozen kindred industries—fish curing and canning, especially the salmon canning industry of the Pacific coast; fruit and vegetable canning in tin sugar refining; the preparation of cereals, and even dairying and cheesemaking.

"Let the public judge us," they propose, "after it has been told the story of the others. When it learns the truth there will be a stampede to an exclusive meat diet. Our products will appear then as the most appetizing dishes that can be offered to the human palate." GEORGE H. PICARD.

Some University Presidents and What They Have Said; Extracts From Addresses and Anecdotes Illustrative of Their Character



DAVID STARR JORDAN, president of Leland Stanford, Jr., university, once said of crime and punishment: "The law of crime is the correction of cause and effect, but there is no such thing as a punishment in nature. Any one who sins gets the punishment. We punish but few of the criminals that exist. It seems to me to be one of the greatest elements in the philosophy of punishment to eliminate all desire for revenge. An indeterminate system of punishment seems to be better than the present system. It seems to me that when any person is dependent upon society he should be restrained and not allowed to reproduce his kind. The point in the philosophy of punishment is to find out what should be done and then now see if it can be done. Not until then is it possible to act."



JACOB GOULD SCHURMAN, president of Cornell university, self made scholar and political economist, is the author of the following: "Just here is the danger of the twentieth century. The retired, secluded, semimonastic idealism of the old college is menaced in its own historic home by the modern, professional and utilitarian studies and interests which encompass it. The educational problem of the next generation is so to maintain the practical and useful that we shall not let go of what is ideal and spiritual. In the insane desire of wealth by all classes and its mad pursuit by so many of our ablest young men lies the greatest danger to our institutions. Knowledge, culture and even scientific efficiency in one's calling are in themselves not only desirable ends, but the supreme ends of life."



JAMES BURRILL ANGELL, president of the University of Michigan, told this story to a class in international law: "Some years ago, when I was minister to Turkey, Greece was visited by a famine. A wave of sympathy swept over the Union, affecting the women particularly. They raised hundreds of dollars. With true Yankee husbandry they did not send the money, but spent it in buying quantities of dresses for the women. One entire ship was loaded by this outpouring of charity. Shortly after the ship arrived I made a trip through Greece. It was in the days when our ladies wore extremely large sleeves, but the style in Greece was not the same. Imagine my surprise when I saw that the women had not known what the garments were and had put them on their husbands for trousers."



CHARLES WILLIAM ELIOT, president of Harvard university, spoke these words at the close of his inaugural address in 1869: "I hear in your voice the voice of the alumni, welcoming me to high honors and arduous labors, charging me to be faithful to the duties of this consecrated office. I take up this weighty charge with a sense of insufficiency, but yet with hope and a good courage. High examples will lighten the way. Deep prayers of devoted living and sainted dead will further every right effort, every good intention. The university is strong in the ardor of its teachers, in the vigor of the corporation and in the public spirit of the community. Above all, I devote myself to this sacred work, in the firm faith that the God of the fathers will be also with the children."



WOODROW WILSON, president of Princeton university, is responsible for this classic yarn: "An elderly minister appeared before a board to be examined for some post. The first branch to be taken up was Latin. 'What is the Latin for goose?' the examiner asked. The poor old minister was stumped. It was pitiful to see him, and a young man seated near could not resist helping him out. 'Answer,' he whispered. 'But the minister continued silent. 'Answer,' he whispered. 'What is the Latin for goose?' the examiner asked. The poor old minister turned his head and looked at his prompter oddly. 'Poor old chap! He almost heard. He wants me to try again,' the young man thought. 'Answer,' he repeated. The minister turned and shook his forefinger at the youth. 'young man in a louder tone. The minister turned his head and looked at his prompter oddly. 'Poor old chap! He almost heard. He wants me to try again,' the young man thought. 'Answer,' he repeated. 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