STOCK MATTERS

TO THE STOCK GROWERS OF CHOTEAU COUNTY.

The Montana Stock Growers' Association elected me as Executive Committee for Choteau county. One of my duties is to solicit membership. I believe the times are ripe for such an organization to prove successful and be of lasting benefit to every stockman. In unity of action much good will result. I earnestly hope that every stock man that thinks he will benefit himself, his neighbor, or the stock interests of Montana, will send me the annual fee $15, and become a member of the Montana Stock Growers' Association. R. S. FORD.

Con. Kohrs outfit started his drive of beef cattle this week from Hay Lake for the railroad. They will ship at Billings, on the Northern Pacific.

We notice quite an improvement in the eastern wool market, this will be good news to many of our woolgrowers who shipped their clip east to commision houses and have not, as yet recieved any returns from it.

The Colorado and Montana Live Stock company has moved its herd of cattle from the Lemhi valley, Idaho, to a range 75 miles west of Miles City, Montana. The Skinner Bros., of Denver, are leading owners in the stock of the company.

A correspondent says that along the Burlington & Missouri railway, in Nebraska, cattle are in fine condition, but up to the present time very few beef cattle have been shipped, although many of the stock men are gathering to ship during the next two weeks.—N. W. Live Stook Journal.

The cattle round-ups of the Musselshell, Smith and Shields River valleys, according to last accounts, are making good progress. Owners are hopeful of branding a much larger number of calves than they found last spring, but at this writing enough of the country has not yet been gone over to determine how the calf crop will turn out.—Husbandman.

The Scotch agents for the Prairie Cattle company declare the alleged land grabbing in Colorado, as reported to the United States land commissioner, untrue. The Dundee Advertiser, organ of the Scotch ranch companies, says the statements of American newspapers upon the quanties of land fenced in by English and Scotch companies are preposterous, and such arrangments are only made for electioneering purposes.

A cattle man, known as "Texas," is in the city. He is down from Montana and states as an argument in favor of Montana as a grazing country, that he recently drove a herd of 1,000 cattle from Texas to that region, being six months and eighteen days on the drive. The change of climate, grasses, water, etc., caused a gain in each animal of 150 to 200 pounds. "Texas" says there is no stock region in the world equal to Montana and western Dakota.—Bismark Tribune.

On the preliminary examinaaion of Dixon, at Fort Collins, charged with killing cattle not his own in North Park, the man Miller, also arrested on the same charge, turned states evidence. As a result of this action Dixon weakened, and attempted but little defence. He was held to answer in the sum of one thousand dollars, and from all appearences the officers have again got on to the right man, and if so he will be made to suffer for his high-handed crookedness.—N. W. L. S. Journal.

Mr. Downs, of the heavy stockgrowing firm of Downs & Allen, informs the Livingston Enterpaise that his firm has driven a large number of range cattle from Idaho to the Porcupine in Custer county, and now have 700 beef steers on the trail from Idaho, which they wish to ship from Livingstone, if stockyards are built in time. Mr. Downs thinks that no more than 175,000 head of cattle have been brought into Montana this year. The Northern Pacific has shipped in about 100,000, and the trail cattle will amount to more than 75,000 and prehaps not more than 50,000. He thinks all estimates above the largest figure are extravignant.

Fence-cutting troubles are commencing again in Texas, and a renewal of last winter's difficulties is anticipated. A dispatch from Abilene, August 24, says: "Last night one and one-half miles of the wire fence of Hugh Moore, a prominent stockman residing on the border of Taylor and Callahan counties was cut and many horses and cattle allowed to depredatr on the adjacent farms. Moore's fence was made of sharp pointed barbed wire. Much complaint was made about his using this material and for some time past threats of cutting have been made. Moore has repaired the fence and applied to the ranger force for protection.—N. W. Live Stock Journal.

A FLOCK-MASTER'S VIEWS.

What I Have Learned About Sheep and Wool.

Sheep husbandry was extensively and profitably carried on at the time when Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were ranching in the East.

When Columbus was looking around for help to enable him to cross the ocean, he found in Spain the finest sheep in the world at that time, and there the only person who had judgment enough to give him aid, in the person of Queen Isabella, who pledged her jewels to raise funds. His effort proved a success, by which much good country was found on which to graze sheep. Not long after the discovery and settlement of America, some of the finest sheep in Spain were imported to America. The fleeces of the bucks at that time were twelve and that of the ewes at eight pounds. They have been improved in the United States until 30 and 40 pounds are not uncommon, and Mr. Isaac Johnson of Los Angeles, an honorable and reliable gentleman, tells me that Mr. Phillesha, of said county, sheared from a buck at one clip 63 pounds, and sent it to the Wool Growers' Association of Texas, which fact can be proved, if doubted, by fifty good men in Los Angeles county.

I have no doubt the American merino of New York and other eastern States is the finest sheep in the world, and that the thoroughbred merino yields the most and finest wool, the best flavored mutton, and commands the highest price all over civilization. The flock masters in the Untted States and other countries for many years have been paying as high as $1,000, and in some cases much higher prices, for favorite merino bucks, and have thought that they were grading up and improving their flocks.

But I hear from dealers in wool that since the reduction in the tariff of 1868 the fine wool is from 75 to 80 per cent dirt, and the finer the staple and heavier the fleece, the more dirt and loss wool to weight. Heretofore the finer the wool the higher the price. But buyers in Utah actually pay more for what they call open wool than for fine or medium fine. The reason given is that in coarse wools there is not so much shrinkage.

Now, the wool buyers are mistaken, or we are, and have been working under a delusion in paying high prices for bucks of high grade and fine wool, by which on their theory we are injuring the sale of our wool. In examining my wool, and I suppose that of others also, they say "your wool is very fine, of nice staple, but very dirty, it will shrink from 75 to 80 per cent." If that is so let the wool growers of Utah post up and see what they have accomplished. If three-fourths of our wool is dirt, only one-fourth is wool. If our sheep average seven pounds 1¼ pounds is wool and 5¾ dirt. If they average eight pounds there are two pounds of wool and six of dirt. You may, but I never have yet seen a fleece assayed. I don't believe such statements. Ought we not to send to China for the flat tail sheep or to Mexico for the straight-haired sheep, so that like a dog they could in a few shakes get rid of any dirt that might happen to get on them? Then our wool would soon become open enough, coarse enough and in demand. I do not suppose there is a flat tail sheep in China or a hairy one in Mexico whose fleece would not weigh 1¾ pounds annually.

I have actually heard men say, in talking about buying fine bucks, that they were afraid to buy them, because their wool would become too fine and unsalable. And they calculated to get Cotswold or Mexican bucks. If the dirt theory, of seventy-five per cent, is correct, would we not be speaking more correctly to say the wool was in the dirt, and not that the dirt was in the wool? If there is so much dirt and so little wool, is it not a sale of real estate we make, instead of wool? Could not the wife of any man selling such wool, if she has not signed, sealed, acknowledged and delivered a deed relinquishing her dower interest therein, bring a suit for dower?

If the buyers, or dirt theory is incorrect, what then is our duty? Insteadof importing bucks from China or Mexico, we should go on improving our sheep, and either import some other wool buyers or induce some already here to engage in buying our fine wool, and let the present buyers still trade in the course wool, of which they understand the shrinkage. We need some plan by which we can avoid falling into the hands of middlemen who ask from 10 to 15 per cent to handle wool. We need a tariff, not only to protect us against the wool of Australia, raised by English pauper or cheap labor, but one that will protect every American industry. We desire a modified tariff, not free trade.

If by the present tariff any interest is too highly protected, let it be lowered. If not protected enough, let it be raised. The wool interest in the United States lost last year $16,000,000, it is said by men who ought to know. If so, it will reach twenty millions the present year. If I had not spun this out so long I would like to give my notions about some sort of an organization by which we can or could cause wool buyers to come to see us and not have to run after them to get to sell a little wool and a great deal of dirt, but I will try to go to the next Wool Growers' Association convention, if not too far off.—Sample Orr, in Salt Lake Tribune.

The Cattle Commissioner.

The duties assigned to the commission appointed under the Animal Industry Law, are various and diversified as assigned by the Commissioner of Agriculture. They are:

1.—The number of cattle bred and fed for the market, and the breed most in use.

2—The extent of territory devoted to pasturage.

3.—The number of cattle devoted to the dairy.

4.—The most acceptable dairy breeds.

5.—The annual increase of cattle.

6.—The annual consumption of cattle.

7.—The breeds best adapted to beef production.

8.—The age at which they are sent to market.

9.—The method of sending them to the centres of trade, such as Chicago and St. Louis in the west.

10.—The cost per head of transportation to these centres, and the cost of feeding until they are fit for beef.

11.—The condition of cattle on the farms and ranches at different seasons of the year, and the mode of sheltering and protecting them, and the percentage of loss in the different localifrom want of shelter.

12.—The present mode of transportation and the improvement that can be suggested.

13.—The various diseases, contagcous and otherwise, to which cattle are liable in the western and northwestern States and Territories, and the actual loss from each of these diseases.

14.—The estimated value of the cattle trade.

15.—The number of Texas cattle driven to ranches and the market from that State, and the extent of disease created by them, and the best methods of protection.

A Cattle Queen.

Miss Maude Reed has been located for five years on the Little Dolores. Coming from Sweeden a poor girl, she launched out into the far west and started with a few head of cattle, and to-day she is one of the shrewdest ablest cattle-owners in Mesa county. Many is the gallant cowboy that has doffed his sombrero and bestowed his devoted attentions upon the fair Maude. She owns 140 head of good grade cattle, and an excellent ranch worth a snug fortune. All this she has accumulated by her own exertions and good business management. Being a fine horsewoman, she superintends the round-up, cutting out and branding her own cattle each year, markets her beef, and attends to her bank account with as much shrewdness as any accomplished cattle-dealer. Rumor has it that the fair queen was to bestow her heart and hand on a neighboring stockman recently, but it must have been only rumor, as she still refuses to bow to Cupid's yoke. We warn all book agents, editors and sky-pilots who travel that way with the idea of picking up a fortune that the lady is credited with being a capital shot and an ardent admirer of woman's rights. —Montros Inquirer.

A Living Curiosity.

Pat Ryan, one of the pioneer stockmen of this section, who is located on the Mulberry, a small stream emptying into the Arkensas river, eighteen miles southeast of Dodge, has what may truly be termed a living curiosity, in the shape of a calf that was born about two weeks ago, which hasn't a single hair on its head or body, and only a few scattering hairs on its legs. The skin of the beautiful animal seems to be considerably bronzed or hardened. It is fully developed, and appears as strong and vigorous as any calf in the herd. It is truly a curiosity to behold. Mr. Ryan proposes to take the best of care of the young animal and see what it will make.—Kansas Ex.

A Bad Fix.

Assistant secretary of the interior has refused the request of the cattlemen on the Oklahoma lands, Indian Territory, to remain until they can remove their cattle without loss to themselves. The order to the army to carry out instructions to remove all intruders from the Oklahoma lands will be enforced, and they will have to go at once. He further says that the cattlemen went in there without permission, and must suffer the consequences.

To remove these cattle now would be an impossibility, as they cannot enter Kansas on account of a quarantine law, and to take them to Texas would be almost certain destruction to the entire herd; or to take them west and up the western Texas trail would be equally destructive.

The question now arises, where in thunder can they go without being subject to dertruction by fever or the opporation of the Kansas quarantine law.

The Fence Problem.

The Sun had a lengthy article last week in favor of fencing pastures as against open ranges. Some of his arguments were sound, and the whole was well written, but theories do not always pan out "according to theory." Success in the cattle business in our northern country in dependent on room and feed. And the former is just as essential as the latter. To endure the intense cold of our winters, the animal must have a roll of fat on the inside, To supplement this there must be freedom of action. Animal instinct carries the beast before the storm, and if an impediment in the shape of a fence is found, freedom of action ceases, because the animal refuses to turn round and face the storm, and by this non-activity loses its life. Whenever the northern sanges are, as a rule, enclosed in pastures the cattle business of the country will be at an end. The expense of the round-ups would be overcome—there would be nothing left to round-up. Long and plausible articles can be written on both sides of this fence question, but the whole matter sifts down to this—Fence your ranges and you must feed in the winter. Until you are prepared to feed all of your cattle throughout the winter you had better give them liberty. A few live ones at the general round-up in the spring are worth all the dead ones in the pasture.

Were it practicable to have the whole country cut up into thousand acre pastures, with hay land and water in each, that would be a consumation to be wished for. But that is not practicable, and the cattle are likely to still roam at will over our plains during the next double decade. —N. W. Live Stock Journal.

Quarantine Regulations.

OTTAWA, Ont., Sept. 10.—The Governor General yesterday signed the new quarantine regulations, affecting the transportation of Montana cattle in bond through the canadian territory, and they will go into effect immediately. They do not interfere with the former order, allowing the transportation of cattle in band from one Canadian point to another, but provide for a strict inspection, and collection of quarantine fees at Fort Walsh and Emmerson. The duration of the detention will be subject to the order of the veterinary surgeon at these points, and they have been officially notified to that effect. The Canadian Pacific will not be allowed to transport Canadian cattle on the same train, and they will be required to fumigate the cars used for the transportation of American cattle. An application made by representative Montana cattle dealers to the English government has been transmitted to the Canadian authorities and sustained. They refuse to allow American cattle to be shipped through to Montreal, claiming it would operate to the detriment of Canadian cattle interests.

Over Production of Stock.

There does not seem to be any imminent danger of over-production of live stock in this country, though we are told oftentimes nowadays that the country is full of hogs, cattle and sheep ready to eat the immense crop of growing corn, and that in a year or two we may look for oversupplies of all kinds of meats. On the contrary, however, our population is increasing by natural multiplication and immigration, and at the present time our production of meat food seems hardly to be keeping pace with the growth of the demand. Prices for all kinds of products and live stock are well maintained in this country, and have for some time been at rates so high that the margin between American and European prices has been so narrow as to make the shippers margins rather problematical. It is not because prices have been particularly low on the other side, that our exports have not been large, but because our supplies have been so closely consumed at home as to make our prices relatively higher than rates current beyond the Atlantic. Prices for what we might send to Great Brittain are not particularly tempting; in fact, are rather low; but our independence as yet of that market is evidenced by the comparatively high prices which American producers are receiving. The following figures show the decrease in our exports of various products during the first half of this year, as compared with last.

The total values of the exports of domestic cattle, hogs and sheep, pork and dairy products, for six months ending June 30, $43,837,419, against $54,357,904 in the same period last year. The beef and pork during the eight months ending June 30, were $57,670,538, against $67,679,841 in the corresponding time in 1883.—Drovers' Journal.

The Cowboy's Lament.

"Times are not like they used to was," said an old time cowboy the other day. "Thar aint no soft snap in punching cows now days. The boys don't hole up now in some log cabin and play stud all winter, like we used to. No, sir; it is work all the year around. First thing in the spring comes the general round-up, then the local round-up, then gathering beef steers, and then haying, and I tell you that last is what just breaks a cowboy's heart, and it something that no end of practice and familiarity will make him handy at. It is out of our line, you see. Never had any use for hay, years ago, and now, to have to make it, and worse yet, round up poor stock and feed them all winter, it is awful rough; most makes a man want to quit the business and go to herding sheep. Thar is almost as much style about that work now, as cow punching. Then thar is the arly spring when every mud hole in creation has its regular number of mired cattle, and we have to pull and haul in mud and water, week in and week out, till the green grass comes, to give them strength to pull themselves out of soft places.

"Yas, the pay is pretty much the same, but thar is a dogorned sight more work for the money all the same. A cow camp aint much ahead of a ranch now days, when you come to size up the toil, and don't you allow the fact to slip your memory young fellow, when you apply for a job on the round-up. I think I will quit the business and go to keeping saloon."

Cattle Disease in Kansas.

OSAGO CITY, Kan., Sept. 10.—Disease appeared among the cattle in the northwestern part of this county, and several fatal cases are reported. Cattle owners do not know what disease it is, but a quarantine has been established to prevent its spread, after being affected cattle only live a day or two. Drowsiness, costiveness, and bloody discharges are the main symptoms. The State veterinary surgeon has been sent for. It is not known whether the disease is contagious but several different herds are affected.

That Colorado is one of the great grazing states there is no longer room to doubt, says the first annual report of the Denver Chamber of Commerce. On Jan. 1, 1884, the grass feeding animals within its boundaries aggregate in value something over $50,000,000; $30,000,000 was in horned cattle, $10,000,000 was in horses and mules and the remainder in sheep and goats.