BEEF TRUST METHODS.

THOUSANDS OF HUMAN BEINGS GROUND DOWN BY PITILESS CORPORATIONS.

Inhuman Treatment of Men and Women Who Are Forced to Work in Great Establishments.—In Lowest Depths of Misery.

BY UPTON SINCLAIR.

(New York World.)

It is literally the truth that the packers treat their men like dogs. There is no place in all Packingtown where the slightest consideration is shown for a human being. They are compelled to be on hand at a certain hour in the morning, even though there is no killing to be done; they are laid off without the slightest ceremony, and they have no idea when the work will start up again. They are cheated out of their pay most shamelessly; if enough men happen to be on hand the bosses will start them up before the whistles blow, and cheat them that way. If they are working overtime and do not make a full hour, even though they fail by only five minutes, they get nothing for it. If any error is made in the computation of their work they have no redress; there is always one answer to every complaint: "If you do not like it you can go else where."

ONE VAST TRUST.

The conditions in Packingtown have reached their present state of degradation by the natural process of competition, or rather, there is competition of labor while there is no competition of capital.. There is but one vast employing trust and a body of absolutely unorganized and helpless types of human beings are coming there. There has been a regular procession of the races through Packingtown; the industry was founded by skilled cattle butchers from Germany; then they began the importing of Irishmen. After the strike of 1894 they set to work deliberately to crowd the labor market so as to prevent further troubles; first they brought Poles, then Bohemians, then Lithuanians, and now finally Slovaks. These are nearly all undersized, wretched people who cannot speak English, and who impress one as having no more intelligence than a dumb animal. The bosses beat them and kick them and spit in their faces. I saw sights of this sort which fairly made my blood boil. I saw a poor, wretched Lithuanian pushing a truck in one of Swift & Co.'s cellars; it was loaded with hams, and the poor fellow was scarcely able to stir it on the level floor. He came to a slight incline and could not get it up, and the boss fell upon him and pounded him out of the place. I presume that he was "firing" him. Another and stronger man took his place.

COMPELLED TO VISIT SALOONS.

One of the things pointed out in the President's report is that the men are provided with no places to eat. It is difficult to imagine what this means in the winter time. I saw them crouching in the stairways of the packing houses and outside under the sheds to get away from the falling snow. In conversation with one of the packers I spoke of the horribly low wages that were paid to the men, and he answered that there was no use in paying any more, because the balance went to the saloon keeper. My reply was that for one thing I had observed that the companies pay their men in checks, and that saloons are the most convenient places in which these can be cashed; and that also as a consequence of the lack of dining-rooms the men are literally compelled to resort to the saloons in winter. The packer then dropped the subject.

Prior to the last strike in Chicago the union officers made a computation, based upon ten thousand time checks, and found that the average weekly wage in Packingtown was between $5 and $6; since the strike, conditions have of course grown worse. A friend of mine who has recently been making investigations for me stated that he stood in a saloon on a Saturday night and gathered up the pay envelopes of the men as they came in and got their checks cashed. He collected over a score, and the average was less than $4; there were some as low as $1.70. This represented a week's wages for an able-bodied man in Packingtown at a dull season.

FROM THE BEEF TRUST REPORT.

Extract From Neill-Reynolds Document Which the President Sent to Congress.

"An absence of cleanliness was found everywhere in the handling of meat being prepared for the various meat-food products. * * *

"As an extreme example of the entire disregard on the part of employes of any notion of cleanliness in handling dressed meat, we saw a hog that had just been killed, cleaned, washed, and started on its way to the cooling room fall from the sliding rail to a dirty wooden floor and slide part way into a filthy men's toilet. It was picked up by two employes, placed upon a truck, carried into the cooling room and hung up with other carcasses, no effort being made to clean it. * * *

"In another establishment, equally well known, a long table was noted covered with several hundred pounds of cooked scraps of beef and other meats. Some of these meat scraps were dry, leathery, and unfit to be eaten; and in the heap were found pieces of pig-skin, and even some bits of rope strands and other rubbish. Inquiry evoked the frank admission from the man in charge that this was to be ground up and used in making 'potted ham.'"

Home-made Bone Fertilizer.

Everyone with a large garden has an out-of-the-way place for fertilizers where a "bone barrel" could be placed. To reduce bones to fertilizer without the use of acids takes time, but for the home garden it is well worth waiting for. Put in a barrel three or four inches of soil, then a closely packed layer of bones, broken up somewhat, and cover these with wood ashes and wet with liquid manure from the stables, if possible, or with plain water strengthened with 10 cents worth of washing ammonia. Repeat the layers as there are bones enough until the barrel is full. Cover with soil, rounding the surface, and sow with clover or grass seed, or plant the top with some plant that will knit the soil together as a cover, that will not let through much moisture. In a year's time empty the barrel, spade the contents together, make into a heap, and let it stand for a month, then use as wanted.

PROFITS IN CHICKENS.

Crate and Machine Fattening Bring the Highest Prices.

T. F. McGrew.

Some time since we published an article on poultry growing North and West, and referred to the large number of fowls that are grown upon the wheat fields of the Northwest and which are purchased and shipped in to the big packing establishments of Kansas City and other western centres. The packers of the west have established enormous finishing plants, as they are called, for the feeding, fattening and preparing of poultry of all kinds for market. The fowls here are received in large numbers, placed in coops that hold from three to five birds, according to their size, and are "trough-fed"—that is, they are fed a mixture of ground meals properly prepared in troughs, and permitted to eat as much as they will consume, from three to five times per day.

Poultry crate-fattened in this way will continue to eat well and thrive from nine to twelve days. So soon as they cease to feed themselves ravenously from these troughs, what is known as the cramming machine is brought into service. The manipulator of the cramming machine must have experience in the handling and feeding of the fowls in this way. The

SHELTERED CRATES USED FOR CRATE-FATTENING.
POULTRY STUFFERS AT WORK.

cramming machine is composed of a feed trough or chamber placed upon the top of a three-legged, movable table, as it might be called, with a plunger in the top, placed there after the cylinder is filled with the properly prepared food, and with the pressure of the foot upon the lever, the food is forced through the tube into the crop of the fowl.

THE CRAMMER IS AN EXPERT.

The operator in charge of the cramming machine has several assistants who bring the fowls from the coop to him; he placing the tube down the throat beyond the windpipe towards the crop, fills the same by a pressure of the foot, always gauging the amount forced into the crop by the hand pressure upon it.

This manner of feeding is carried on for a sufficient number of days to make the entire period of feeding from 19 to 21 days. An experienced handler knows just the time when the fowls are finished ready for killing. When this time arrives, they are speedily killed, dry-picked, and placed in proper condition for market.

The food made use of for this purpose is a mixture of meals of several kinds, to conform to the requirements of the market. Ground oats, corn and middlings, mixed with boiled milk or water into a very dry mash or mixed food is made use of for the first 12 to 14 days for trough feeding. During this period, the fowls have grit and plenty of water to drink where they can help themselves. So soon as they show a disposition to stop feeding themselves, all the food, water and grit is removed from the trough, and the stuffing machine is brought into service. The same meals mixed into a gruel are used for this purpose, the food forced into the crop with the stuffing machine in a semi-fluid condition, and no water or grit whatever is given to the fowls during this period, the semi-liquid food furnishing sufficient moisture for the greatest improvement.

GREAT GAIN IN WEIGHT AND QUALITY.

Fowls that are fed in this way gain largely in weight. For instance, a fowl placed in the coop weighing three pounds and a quarter, bones, feathers and offal, would weigh from one and a half to two pounds more when finished, adding in this way two pounds of edible meat to the carcass, and so improving the entire carcass as to add from three to four cents per pound to its value over that of poultry of that kind not so well finished. Thus, a fowl weighing three pounds and a quarter, worth 9 cents per pound, would sell for thirty cents as it came from the range. The same fowl, after being fed three weeks, would weigh five and a quarter pounds and sell for twelve cents a pound at the lowest calculation, which would be 63 cents for the same carcass, after having been fed for three weeks. The estimate placed upon the cost of feeding is about ten to twelve cents per head.

What is known as the yellow-skinned or yellow-meated poultry is prime favorite in the markets of this country. To intensify and beautify the richness of these colors, meal made from yellow corn is largely used in the process of fattening. For the English market, which is largely catered to by these packers, fowls having the white color of flesh are preferred. To intensify and improve this, ground oats, meal from white corn, and some finely ground rice is made use of. To add luster, finish and quality to all these, a small per cent. of melted tallow is mixed into the warm mash, and fed in a semi-liquid state the last four or five days of feeding.

The fattening of poultry with corn adds fatty globules throughout the entire carcass. A fowl that has been fattened with corn is usually what might be termed greasy meat, while poultry finished or fattened in this way lays on close or solid meat with no globules of fat scattered through it. Crate and machine fattened poultry sells for the highest prices of any poultry sent to market.

A peculiarity in these conditions is the fact that poor or inferior specimens cannot be successfully fattened or finished in this way. Only the well-grown thrifty specimens can be profitably crate-fattened and improved in weight and character of flesh. One must understand thoroughly well the process of handling poultry for this purpose, or he cannot succeed. Where it is well done and nicely finished and prepared for market, poultry finished in this manner is the most desirable, both in this country and abroad.

PACKING FOR MARKET.

In packing for market, square boxes that will hold 12, 24 and 48 chickens are made use of. Fowls all of one size and weight with the same appearance are packed in one box. This plan is of great advantage in selling. Farmers and country people generally lose a large amount of profit through the carelessness in dressing and sending their fowls to market. When nicely graded and selected, all of one kind in a package, both eggs and poultry bring the highest prices. It is the finest quality that makes the profit in poultry growing. This is what the large packing houses, which handle hundreds of thousands of fowls in this way, aim to make of all they fatten.—

Cultivation of Garden Crops.

Frequent shallow cultivation should be employed for most garden crops, and during dry weather the depth should not exceed 2 inches. By keeping the surface soil well stirred what is termed a "dust mulch" is formed, and while this layer of finely pulverized soil will become quite dry, it prevents the escape of moisture through the pores of the soil. A mulch consisting of fine manure, clippings from the lawn, or any similar material, spread to a distance of 10 or 12 inches around the plants will preserve the moisture; but the mulch should not be so heavy or matted as to exclude the air.

A crust forming over the soil after a rain or watering is detrimental to plant growth and should be broken up as soon as the land can be worked. To determine when the soil is sufficiently dry for cultivation, apply the same test of squeezing together in the hand as is utilized in determining when to plow. Sandy soils can be worked much sooner than clay soils after a rain. Too much importance cannot be placed upon the matter of thorough cultivation of the garden, and if the work is promptly and properly done there will be little difficulty in controlling weeds.

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