

**AMERICAN MEAT AND
ITS INFLUENCE UPON
THE PUBLIC HEALTH**

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American meat and its influence upon the public health by Albert Leffingwell

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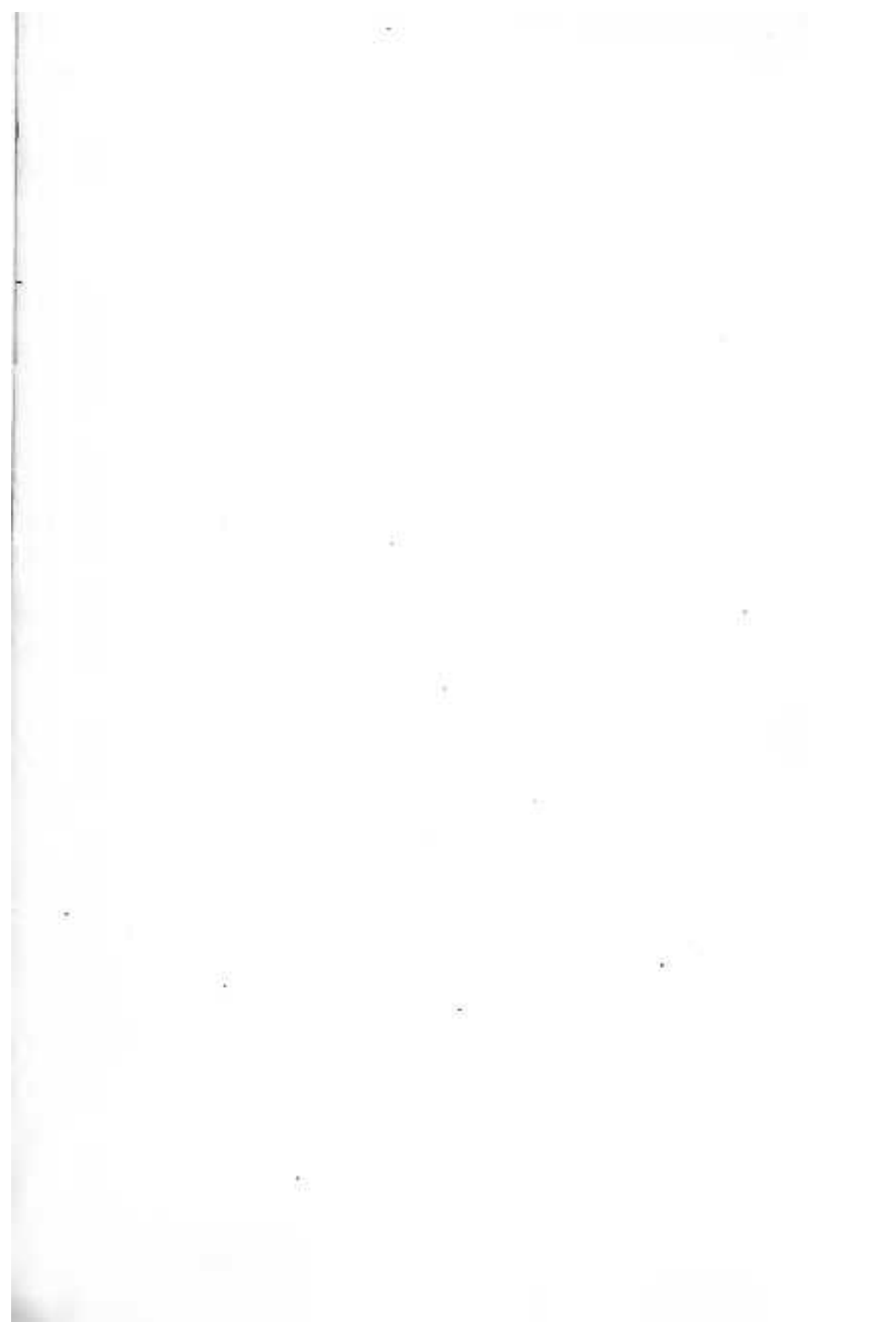
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PUBLIC HEALTH

BY

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PREFACE

THE pages which follow represent the results of a somewhat unusual inquiry. Up to a recent period, the writer regarded the products of American packing-houses with that implicit and unquestioning confidence which so generally prevails in America and England. There had been grave scandals and exposures; but these had ended in rectification of all abuses, and in permanent reforms. The inspection of meat—the oversight of its manufacture into various products—had been confided to a Department of the Federal Government, where it was supposed there could be no temptation to formulate rules that should be contrary to the public health. It was while passing through one of the great meat-producing establishments of Chicago, that the casual remark of an employee suggested further investigations, leading to a revelation of conditions hitherto

unsuspected, which it is the purpose of these pages to make known.

It will be noted that frequent references are made to the "Meat Trust." The term is here used, not to indicate a business entity of any kind, but simply an influence which proceeds from the financial interests involved. Fifty years ago, in America, men spoke of the "Slave power" as controlling the Government of the United States. In like manner, we refer to the Meat Trust. Of any such financial combination or organisation we have no evidence. But some power exists, capable of making its influence felt regarding everything that touches this trade in flesh. Some power has been able to prevent the total condemnation of diseased animals for food purposes. Some powerful influence induced Congress to place the cost of inspecting meat, not upon the producers, but upon the people of the United States. Some influence caused the regulations governing meat inspection to be always more favourable to sordid interests than to public welfare. This malign influence we designate the Meat Trust. The final analysis regarding its origin we leave to others.

It is certain that the conclusions brought forward in these chapters will be disputed by those whose financial interests are in any way concerned. Regret will be expressed because of the publicity given to methods of meat inspection which hitherto have eluded observation and criticism. Distinguished experts will be brought forward to assure us that in their judgment no danger to health is likely to result from the acts herein condemned. But one point is impregnable. In the face of evidence here produced, it is impossible to deny the practices which the Regulations of the United States Department of Agriculture explicitly sanction and permit. Are such permissions in perfect accord with public sentiment in England and America? That is the problem which we here put to the test.