

CATTLE AND CATTLE-BREEDERS

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Cattle and Cattle-Breeders by William M'Combie

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WILLIAM M'COMBIE

**CATTLE AND
CATTLE-BREEDERS**

CATTLE

AND

CATTLE-BREEDERS

BY

WILLIAM M'COMBIE

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WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS

EDINBURGH AND LONDON

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CATTLE
AND
CATTLE-BREEDERS.

I. THE FEEDING OF CATTLE, ETC.

(Read before the Chamber of Agriculture.)

As my friend Mr Stevenson and some other members of the Chamber of Agriculture have expressed a desire that I should read a paper on my experience as a feeder of cattle, I have, with some hesitation, put together a few notes of my experience. I trust the Chamber will overlook the somewhat egotistical form into which I have been led in referring to the subject of dealing in cattle.

My father and my grandfather were dealers in cattle. The former carried on a very extensive business : he had dealings with several of the most eminent feeders in East-Lothian ; among others with the late Adam Bogue, Linplum, John Rennie of Phantassie, Mr Walker, Ferrygate, &c. I cannot express how much I reverence the memory of the late Adam Bogue, as one of the finest specimens of a kind-hearted gentleman I have ever met. Other friends of my father and of myself in East-Lothian I also recall with the greatest respect ; among these let me mention William Brodie, John Brodie, William Kerr, John Slate, Archibald Skirving, and Mr Broadwood, farmers, all eminent as feeders of stock. My father's chief business - connection was with East-Lothian ; but he had also a connection with Mid-Lothian and the county of Fife, and a large trade with England. At one of the Michaelmas Trysts of Falkirk he sold 1500 cattle. He wished to give all the members of his family a good education. I was kept at school, and was afterwards two

years at college ; but to this day I regret my inattention when at school.

My father was very unwilling that I should follow his business, knowing that it was a very precarious one ; but what could he do with me ? I would do nothing else, and he was obliged to yield. I worked on the farm for years, when not away at the fairs, with the servants, and shared their diet. I cut two harvests, and during the season took charge of the cattle. My first speculation was a £12 grass-field. In this I had a partner, an excellent man, who had been a servant to my father for twenty years. It was a good year, and we divided £15 of profit. This gave me encouragement. I yearly increased my speculations, and gradually got into my father's business at the Falkirk markets and Hallow Fair. My father was very indulgent, and sent me away to a fair when a very young man, giving me authority to buy, and money to pay for, half-a-dozen beasts. I exceeded my commission and bought three little lots—about fifteen in all. The owners trusted me