Argentine Republic.

			Value.
			£
Beef	(cwt.)	2,795,913	4,136,819
Mutton	,,	1,433,097	2,440,996

The importation of live cattle from the Argentine was prohibited during the period under review, owing to foot-and-mouth disease.

MANCHESTER'S MONOPOLY.

As we announced in the *Daily Chronicle* on the 23rd November, an American firm has obtained a monopoly of the lairages in Manchester and in Birkenhead. The former were hitherto open to all comers, but they are to be reserved for the benefit largely, if not entirely, of this horde of invaders upon British trade. This will enable them to deal with the large quantity of offal taken from the vast numbers of imported and other cattle, thus depriving other fat-melting manufacturers, who had erected factories and plant, from obtaining supplies of raw material. This, as we have shown above, is only the beginning of what is called the consolidation of the foreign meat trade in England.

The trouble at Manchester was the subject of a long discussion at a representative meeting of the Manchester Wholesale Meat and Cattle Salesmen's Association yesterday. The meeting was a private one, but our representative was afterwards informed that those present argued that the Corporation's arrangement, if carried into effect, will create a monopoly in the trade by crushing out of existence the individual importation of live cattle from Canada and the United States to Manchester, and that it will be detrimental alike to the interests of the shareholders in the meat-markets and to the public.

A further ground of complaint was that the Corporation should have agreed to erect a building and provide machinery to enable the company to render their lard at Manchester, so as to obviate the necessity of having to send it for treatment to Birkenhead, as is now the case.

The opinion was expressed that such an agreement was unconstitutional, and really beyond the powers of the Corporation. In the end the meeting appointed a deputation to wait upon the Markets Committee and discuss these points with them. The result of the interview will be reported to another meeting of the association.

[*Westminster Gazette*, 2nd December, 1907.]

THE BEEF TRUST.—AMERICA'S GIGANTIC MONOPOLY.—ITS OPERATIONS IN ENGLAND.

(By a Special Representative.)

No possibility exists of reconciling the two broad views of the Beef Trust of America, which more and more becomes the Beef Trust of this country also. On the one hand, we have the picture of a ruthless combination stamping out all its competitors, coercing the stock-raiser at the one end and the retail meat-dealer at the other, forcing its own terms upon railway companies and upon shippers, obtaining illegal rebates, and, in fact, maintaining a monopoly by every device that huge capital can command. On the other, stands a representation of a semi-philanthropic agency, which sells its meat dead for less than is paid for it alive, which has brought the markets of the world to the meat-producer, which gives the consumer the assurance of receiving the meat that he requires in splendid condition, and which has redeemed the railways and the shippers alike from the shackles of their own incompetence. In either case the observer sees the same facts, but the point of view is different.

How the Trust gained Power.

The history of the American Beef Trust—which, incidentally, covers very much more than beef—is the history of the refrigerator-car. That invention enabled the packinghouses to establish themselves in Chicago, and to distribute fresh meat to every quarter of the United States. The railways were slow to adopt the refrigerator-car, and so the packinghouses built their own. Then, if the railway companies wished to move the meat business that was offered to them, they had practically to hire the cars of the packers. They paid a price for them that gave the owners a very substantial profit on their outlay—a real rebate upon the charges fixed for freight. The independent dealer who went to the companies was told that they had no cars, and if he provided cars of his own he did not find the railway managers in generous mood. That was how it came that four or five great houses in Chicago were able to crush or absorb their competitors.

There still remained the local cattle-markets to compete with the products from Chicago. In the big centres the trust firms were able to establish central refrigerating depots—great store-houses from which they sold meat at prices which drove the local wholesalers out of business, and left the butchers to become retailers of beef that was actually killed a thousand miles or more away. Next, the butchers in the smaller centres were dealt with by a series of "route" cars—refrigerators on wheels—from which the dealers got whatever meat they wanted at prices below the cost of local killing. The butcher bought "dressed" sides, and became practically a distributing agent for the trust.

Finally, there was the raiser of cattle to be dealt with. His own market had become, for practical purposes, Chicago, and when his animals arrived at the Chicago stockyards he found there was no longer brisk competition for his stock. The purchasers were all bound together by a common interest, and there was only one bid for the arriving animals, with no chance of a sale elsewhere if the price offered were not satisfactory. In 1890 a Committee of the United States Senate reported that the price of cattle at Chicago had fallen seriously. "The market of that city," says the report, "dominates absolutely the price of beef-cattle in the whole country, and the business is practically in the hands of four establishments. Cattle-owners going with their cattle to the Chicago market find no competition among buyers, and, if they refuse to take the first bid, are forced to accept a lower one." Little wonder that the price of living beef had a downward tendency, while that of the finished product was ever upward.