

CIRCULAR.

To the Butter Trade of Canada.

THE Butter Trade of Canada being one of great and increasing importance, and the losses or gains of the business being largely dependent on quality, suggestions tending to elevate the standard of Canadian Butter cannot be too frequently urged on the attention of those concerned in its production. Some good has already resulted in certain sections from attention to hints supplied by practical individuals; but although the general product shows some improvement on the experience of a few years back, still the defects are so numerous, and the general average so much below what it might be, that we venture again to urge the importance of seeking some effectual remedy for this crying evil. This is the more opportune, inasmuch as the present depression and prospective loss is mainly occasioned by the very inferior quality of the Butter in stock. The keen competition and high prices during the summer and fall months, doubtless tended to carelessness during the closing season; but in view of the disastrous results it has entailed, the wisdom of greater care for the future must be apparent.

The matter is one which, on the score of political economy, should engage serious attention, as thousands of dollars are annually lost to the country through the causes referred. Shippers have experienced so much loss, disappointment, and vexation for many years in exporting to Britain, where Canadian Butter is in growing disrepute, that, unless the quality be improved, it must in a large measure cease to engage attention. The fact that third quality—even according to our own standard of inspection, which is below that of Britain—is above the average receipts from Upper Canada, and that much of what arrives, if subjected to this test, would be classed as grease, or but one remove from it, bespeaks an amount of ignorance or mismanagement highly discreditible. Difficulties, we know, exist in new sections of country which only time and cultivation can effectually overcome; but in the older settled districts, where stock is generally good and pasturage unexceptionable, the common defects observable are absolutely without excuse or palliation.

The correction of the evil we conceive to lie mainly in the hands of merchants themselves, and can only be remedied by proper discrimination in purchasing from manufacturers. So long as the practice obtains of paying a uniform price for everything offered under the name of Butter, so long must the grievance be perpetuated and increased. Let the pale, streaky, sour, rancid, and generally ill-made trash be either rejected altogether or only taken at its proportionate value, and encouragement will thus be given to careful and competent manufacturers, and the careless and slovenly will find it their interest to improve.

THE DAIRY.—While reform in every department is called for, it must of course begin at the Dairy; as no subsequent doctoring can cure the defects of Butter if originally bad; and experience has shown that the denomination "dairy-packed," so generally thought to imply everything desirable, is a grievous fallacy. We have seen many parcels of such lacking in every essential of good Butter, and utterly unfit for human food.

For the production of good Butter, a cool, airy apartment, scrupulous cleanliness and sweetness in every detail, and frequent churnings, are indispensable. The cream should not be kept nor suffered to remain too long on the milk for the sake of increased quantity, and at the time of churning should be about a temperature of 64°. Let the churning process be briskly and steadily performed. Wash the Butter in clear spring water till freed from milk, else it soon loses flavor and turns rancid, besides being subject to serious shrinkage in weight; but avoid overworking, as then it becomes tough and clammy. Good Butter has a bright transparent appearance which ill-worked or over-washed will not present. Aim at producing richness and uniformity of color as well as flavor; but never resort to artificial coloring, as it only injures the flavor, and none but the inexperienced are deceived by it. Carefully avoid excessive salting, as this is reckoned an insuperable objection for the British market. Use only the *best fine salt*, as coarse will ruin any Butter; and to each pound of salt an ounce or two of powdered white sugar may be added with advantage. Guard against needless exposure to the air, as the strong unpalatable flavor of much Butter is largely due to this cause. In packing, let the vessel be filled to its utmost capacity, and at once headed up as closely as possible; and if perfect uniformity in color is impracticable, let the several colors be kept separate, as nothing strikes the eye more unfavorably on drawing a sample or turning out the contents of a package than the great diversity so common, and no single defect is so prejudicial to a sale. Parcels otherwise respectable are frequently rejected, or have to be sacrificed through this very cause.

PACKING.—The best method, and the one adopted in those sections from which our best Butter comes, is to give out or sell the packages to the farmers, taking care that the dry tare is legibly marked on the vessel. In this way the defects and irregularities incident to store-packing will be, to a large extent, avoided; but when packing in the store is unavoidable, it should be done in a clean, sweet, and airy apartment, by all means avoiding the too common practice of allowing Butter in rolls to be exposed for days together to the action of a close musty atmosphere. Those who use Butter-workers should guard against overworking, as the attempt to blend widely dissimilar colors often ends in destroying the grain of the Butter, and reducing the whole to a species of unsightly paste. As in the dairy so in the store, where uniformity cannot be attained, the several colors and qualities should be kept apart, and in packing no salt whatever should be put between the layers, as, besides preventing the compactness of the whole, it hinders the drawing of a clean sample, and gives the appearance of a much larger admixture of salt than may be really the case.

Fill the package to its utmost capacity; as otherwise, during mild or warm weather, the handling and shaking in the course of transit displaces the contents, and often, on arrival, the cloth and salt are found worked into the Butter, the Butter itself reduced to oil, or oozing out or adhering to the head and sides of the vessel, and the whole presenting a most disgusting spectacle. Place a clean white cloth or piece of cambric over the top, carefully tuck down the edges with a knife, sprinkle a thin layer of fine salt over the cloth, add a little brine sufficient to wet the salt, and finish by heading up closely. KEGS should be of white oak, white ash, or birch, well made, neat and clean, of uniform size, and capable of holding about 90 lbs., which is the weight generally preferred. SLIP COVERS, while more readily placed or removed by the inexperienced, can only be used with advantage during cool weather, as they cannot be employed for forwarding when the Butter is liable to become soft. TINNETS or TUBS are most desirable for really prime Butter, but should not exceed 50 to 60 lbs., and should be neat, clean, and inviting in appearance: old or unsightly packages should never be used for sending abroad.

FORWARDING.—Unless in warm weather, or seasons of extreme depression, it is usually best to forward as soon after packing as practicable, and by the most expeditious route, as operating in view of existing rates is found in experience to be safest and most profitable on the average. Mark your own or consignees' initials, a running number, and the dry tare, with a neat stencil-plate (we will supply them, without charge, to those of our customers who may desire). Using many letters or flourishing over the head of a package with lampblack, not only disfigures the appearance, but entails extra labor and expense on shippers, who have to remove original marks in preparing for shipment. Inaccuracy in tares is a fruitful source of annoyance and disputes. The package should be carefully weighed *while dry*, and the weight accurately marked; omitting, however, all fractional parts of a pound; or, what is still better, let the cooper scribe or brand the dry tare before the package leaves his premises, and in no case should the soakage be included. Carefully insert marks in the Bill of Lading or Railway Receipt, which enclose in your letter of advice, that, on arrival, your Agent may at once be able to identify your consignment, and attend to it as he may be directed. If a parcel consists of various qualities, distinguish each by a particular mark, directing the attention of your Commission Agent to such mark, that he may be guided accordingly.

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