

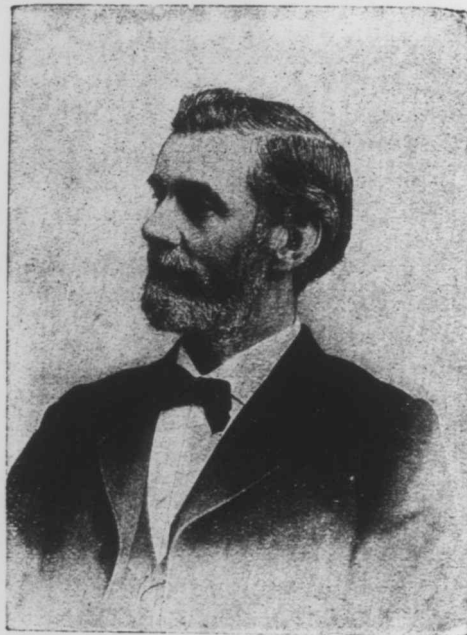
CALIFORNIA EVAPORATED FRUIT.

A few years ago California evaporated fruit was unheard of as a grocery line in this country. Now it is fast becoming one of the staples of the trade. It is already established upon a substantial basis in popular favor, a basis that promises to widen, as that of the canned goods trade widened. It is only during the last three or four years that California evaporated fruits have been handled on this market. Their beginning was a modest one. An unpretentious trade by one or two fruit men opened the business. A few lots were sold the first year, but they were good seed, and the next year a larger quantity was disposed of through a larger number of dealers. Finally the wholesale grocery trade took hold of the business, and now several of our grocery jobbers and all our leading fruit men handle evaporated fruits and handle a good many of them. Thus the goods have not been on the market more than long enough to get well through their experimental stage. They have been pretty thoroughly tried, being well diffused by the many houses importing them, and the general verdict speaks in increased consumption. There is nothing more delicious than apricot preserves. With a little cream they become ambrosial. It is this quality which is the mainstay of these fruits in popular favor.

The market conditions this year are about equally adverse and favorable to the trade in evaporated fruits, so that any increase or decrease in the sales must be owing to something intrinsic in the goods themselves. Already, as compared with the corresponding portion of former years, the present season shows a very considerable increase. That is a testimony to the inherent excellence of the fruits. The market influences special to the year that were said to balance each other, were the following: On the one hand, the abundance of the California fruit crop, and the lower price of sugar since the duty was taken off a year ago in the United States; on the other, the abundance of Canadian small fruits and the cheapness of sugar since the duty was taken off last June in this country. Owing to the first set of causes evaporated fruits come about 10c. cheaper than they did a year ago. Apricots that were as high as 22c. last year, are now as low as 12½c. Very good apricots can now be retailed at 15c. But while the factors have been strong for an increase in consumption, they are offset by the second set of conditions given above. Our own small fruits have been very plentiful. In the preserved form, owing to very cheap sugar, they abound more than they ever did before—domestic and factory canning having been very large last summer and fall. Also imported and native dried fruits, as apples, raisins, etc., are very cheap. All this pretty well makes

up for the 10c. lower price for evaporated California fruits. Yet the demand for unpeeled peaches and apricots has been very much greater here than it ever was before. Peeled peaches being much higher, selling at 22c., have gone less freely into trade. Plums likewise have not been in as strong request, probably because our own plums were plentiful.

Evaporated fruits are simply an addition to grocery lines, they are not a substitute for some other line that is being displaced by them. For them an expansion of the range of consumption must be made. They therefore benefit trade. The statements that they do not supplant anything else must, however, be made with qualification. They do undoubtedly cover some of the ground formerly taken up by prunes, but as it was usually a matter of comparative price between dried apples and prunes whether the



MR. L. J. CALLANAN.

Above is the portrait of Mr. L. J. Callanan, the courteous and energetic manager of the Food and Health Exposition now being held in New York. This should have been presented with our report last week of the opening of the exhibition, but for the fact that the cut did not arrive in time.

latter should be in great demand or not, the effect of the competition of evaporated fruits is not so obvious in the prune trade.

Prices favor the buyer in apricots, but they are likely to go up on peaches. Chicago buyers were caught on apricots, and bear influences prevail. There is nothing now held at the coast.

The Hamilton retail grocers will close at 7 p.m. every day, excepting Saturdays and evenings before holidays, commencing April 4.

SIDE LINES, OR GLIMPSES INTO MY NOTE-BOOK.

TEA.

Everybody has observed when passing the majority of grocery stores in the city, either at the door or exposed in the windows, one or more half chests or caddies of tea with the alluring legend of the price and quality conspicuously labelled on the same. In fact one almost expects to see this article in the grocery windows, so long has the pernicious habit of showing tea in this manner been indulged in by the average grocer. It is a puzzle to me how such stores can give their customers a satisfactory cup of tea, and how they can retain the patronage of their clients for any length of time. I have endeavored to impress on the minds of such of my connection as profess to do a tea trade the necessity of keeping this delicate article in proper packages or bins, air-tight or nearly so, and I am happy to say have prevailed on them to do so. Were it not for the reason of self-interest I should have done so in any event. I find, and every traveller will admit the truth of my statement, that frequently after having sold a customer a lot of 5 or 10 half-chests of tea, the customer complains of the quality of some of the packages not being equal to the others, weaker, color poorer, etc., when the real trouble is that he has had this particular chest in his window or at the door exposed to light, air, dust and other injurious effects. How under heaven can they be up to standard? This delicate plant whose precious fluid is cheering to mankind the world over, is not a cabbage, turnip or potato, and cannot be handled roughly. In my opinion it is almost if not quite as sensitive to outside injurious influences as butter, and though it is not porous it still has the faculty of absorption. Tea, if emptied at all out of the original package, should be put into a lead-lined tin or bin, and when the clerk has put up the required quantity for his orders he should completely cover the remaining tea in the bin with the lead, and keep out entirely the air and light. How many clerks, and yes, how many proprietors, give this article the attention it requires? Yet everyone of them knows that it is the principal article on which a good margin of profit can be claimed. In my opinion the wholesale tea handlers would materially improve the state of the tea trade by issuing jointly a circular setting forth the necessity of handling tea in the proper manner, and urging upon the retail dealer the necessity of raising the taste of the tea-drinking community by offering them tea that is tea, giving in the circular such hints as the retailer will not fail to take advantage of. The result of such action cannot fail to be anything but satisfactory to all concerned, the importer, jobber, retailer and consumer.

The question might be asked, How is the