

Buying, Handling and Selling Coffees.

ONE OF THE PRIZE ESSAYS.

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BUYING coffee, is, I contend, the most important of the three above mentioned. A grocer may be a good seller, but a poor buyer; but as the old saying is, "Goods well bought are half sold," and that applies to coffee as well as to other lines of any description.

In buying coffee, first of all, buy good coffee. It is not good policy for a grocer or any coffee dealer to buy a lot of cheap coffee, perhaps the cheapest he can procure in the market, then as some grocers do, advertise it heavily at a mere cost and supply his customers; in fact, load them up with his cheap trash (as it may be termed), which, in many cases, will lose him customers, because of the poor-quality coffee he supplied them with; also, he has loaded up, perhaps, most of his customers with this low-grade coffee, who have previously been buying good coffee. It is certain if his coffee does not give satisfaction he will lose many future coffee sales as well as sales of other goods. Then he loses the public confidence in his coffee, decreases his sales; and, it is most important to note, that the merchant also deprives himself of his profit in more than one way. In doing this he will have very few customers left to sell coffee to for a time.

IN BUYING CHEAP, LOW-GRADE COFFEE.

he can't make a reasonable margin. There are as many pounds of good coffee consumed as cheaper lines; in fact, more pounds if the coffee is good and gives satisfaction. He therefore has an opportunity of selling more pounds, and making a better margin per pound. Consequently it is all important and profitable to buy good coffee.

GOOD COFFEE BRINGS NEW CUSTOMERS.

I may add good coffee will also bring new customers to a store. It is necessary for a grocer to study the wants of his customers when buying coffee. For instance, in buying coffee for a German community, you must buy coffee which has strength, as strength is really more considered than flavor, but both are better than one. Still, a German will, in nine cases out of ten, prefer a cup of strong coffee, where English-speaking people prefer a mild but nicely flavored coffee.

It is not advisable to carry too many lines; a good plan is to

BRING OUT A FEW LINES

of your own blends. Term them, say, "Smyth's Golden Blend,"—or whatever you wish to term them. See that you have them blended in the proper proportion so as to produce strength and flavor; both these blends should be advertised in your local paper or papers; also, a nice display of the particular line you are advertising. Then, to do it up proper

HAVE A DEMONSTRATION

in your store. Serve the line you wish to introduce; invite everybody to call in and try your blend coffee. In this way everybody will know about "Smyth's Blend Coffee," and no one else in the country has it for sale, only the merchant who introduces it.

Always strain your coffee before serving as well as not to leave it in the pot, which will in a short time make your coffee harsh and will not retain its original flavor. A lady should serve it, but she should be well instructed how it

should be done. Don't forget to have sugar and cream handy. Some prefer it without sugar or cream. It would be well to have a line of low-grade coffee ready to draw, also, to convince your customers of the fact that there is really a big difference in coffee—more so than they thought. When buying coffee for these blends see that you always buy exactly the same in order to keep your blends uniform. When your blends vary you are apt to lose the confidence of the public. They will then say you are selling them a cheaper coffee at the same price. Keep up the standard, and no one else can supply your customers with the same coffee. After you have demonstrated, say, a 25c. line, in a month or so, demonstrate a higher grade, say, a 40c. line.

To make this blend scheme complete, get some nice coffee bags, lined or lead-lined, and have your blend printed on the bags, and never send out that particular blend only in that bag. Don't buy a large quantity of roasted coffee at a time. Even if well kept it is well to buy your roasted coffee in small quantity and often; and have it fresh, which will give your customers better satisfaction and retain its flavor and strength. Should there be an advance in the coffee market, and you wish to take advantage of it,

BUY THESE LINES GREEN

and get them fresh roasted when required; or, if a grocer has time, or means to afford his own coffee roaster, it is well to do so. The fresher roasted you can supply your customers, the better satisfaction they will give; but there are very few wholesale grocers who have their own coffee roasters. They are expensive, and unless the grocer has a large coffee trade it does not pay. Fresh roasted coffee gives the best results in all cases.

WHEN BUYING COFFEE.

consider, also, that you have to live from the profits, and consider what you can sell it at retail to get a good reasonable margin. It is good policy to buy from a reliable house whether you are a coffee judge or not. If not a good judge of coffee, it is all the more necessary, but study coffee as well as other branches of your business and learn to be a good judge of coffee. When buying coffee see that your customers are getting value. It is to your interest to buy coffee right; also to buy for your customers' interests. When buying green coffee buy a Golden Rio, Teaberry, or Maracaibo. See that they are all nice, clean and even beans. I, for myself, would not buy a Ceylon coffee. In my opinion it is without strength and has little flavor, while the price asked for it is too high.

I would not advise grocers to buy Mocha or Java coffees green, as the housewife in roasting her coffee in the oven will not get the full advantage of the fine flavors these coffees contain; so it is desirable not to sell them green. A grocer should read the coffee markets daily; also, in his trade journal. He can get weekly reports which are very instructive, and there may be a time, probably not far away, when a coffee stock will be better than the money it cost.

It is well to buy

A SMALL STOCK OF PACKAGE COFFEE

or coffee in tins, so as to be able to supply your customers should they object to buy your bulk coffees. For picnicing buy condensed coffee; it is very convenient. But these are