

REFORM IN FRUIT PACKING.



THE following letter to the Glasgow Citizen will be of interest to every fruit-grower in the Niagara peninsula :

Sir,—In near prospect of the annual advent of the great fruit trade, timely suggestions of improvement in catering arrangements beneficial to the great consuming public, apart from the workers and dealers in the merchandise, are appropriate and necessary.

The trade is a great one and increases by leaps and bounds every year. The article itself is wanted and annual expectations are founded upon it. The fruit is being recognized as a necessary article of family food. No other apples—for one reason or another—can be made substitutes for those of American growth. The harvest prospects of the crop in America this year are well reported of. But the barrel form (containing 120 to 140 pounds) of package shipment is a failure, and is demoralizing the trade in public estimation here.

In Canada the trade is primarily commenced by orchard contractors, and then from them in bulk of barrels to the shippers and their consignees. The former are knavish, and the latter are unconcerned beyond their computations ; and both of them are ignorant and unlearned in the wants of the people here, upon whose patronage the prosperity of the trade is depending.

In packing these barrels the contractor places a few inches of select fruit on top and bottom, while the centre is filled with any sort you choose to call them. Sampling either end is no criterion of the stock. Emptying the barrel is interminable work, damaging the fruit, and the packer's knavery has not even extenuating cleverness to show for it. The result is that brokers can give no guarantee under their hammer. Even three random barrels in a shipment lot opened is no criterion—the character of a lot being so miscellaneous in itself. Dealers hesitate to purchase uncertain stock. The broker's ledger is creeping with disputed accounts in consequence of misrepresented stock, and what is worst of all and becoming fatal to the trade is that the family man will not buy a barrel at all on account of its quantity (120 to 140 pounds), and the uncertainty of the quality throughout the barrel.

Again, there are barrels known as slacks, but as a rule these proclaim themselves to an observer, and are the result of ignorance on the part of the packing orchard contractor, who puts over-ripe fruit in the centre of the barrel. The broker generally is obliged to sacrifice such lots, but all the same the good fruit is lost to the use of man, and the inconvenient barrel package is one-half at least of the primary cause of the loss.

Now, these barrels—containing 120 to 140 pounds and costing half a dollar