

XEROX

# THE CANADIAN GROCER

& GENERAL STOREKEEPER

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and General Storekeepers.

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SPECIAL TO OUR READERS.

As the design of THE CANADIAN GROCER is to benefit mutually all interested in the business, we would request all parties ordering goods or making purchases of any description from houses advertising with us to mention in their letter that such advertisement was noticed in THE CANADIAN GROCER.

THIS WEEK'S MOTTO:

Not what is my due, but what is my duty.

A decision given by Judge Dugas in Montreal the other day bears out a view brought forward in these columns a fortnight ago, that the grocer should put on all parcels of mixed coffee sent out by him the words "Coffee Compound." In the case of Vermette & Masse, the Judge ruled that the grocer is liable under the Adulteration Act unless he takes the precaution to mark parcels of impure coffee with these words. The defendants, it is said, will appeal against the verdict. The issue of such a step will be of interest to the whole trade, by whom this will be regarded as a test case. It requires such an action to settle whether the meaning or the language of the customer is to be taken note of by the grocer in filling orders for coffee. If a customer asks for a 25-cent coffee and indicates what he wants by that form of words, it is plain to the grocer that the man wants coffee

compound. The customer's naming it coffee is no evidence that he wants the only thing that in strictness can be legally called coffee. In the meantime, until some authoritative deliverance reverses the decision of Judge Dugas, the grocer should be on his guard and label all compound coffee as "compound."

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At the last meeting of the Toronto Retail Grocers' Association, D. W. Clark broached the idea of incorporation in the grocery trade, and referred briefly to the value of a previous training and an entrance examination as principles of selection to get good men into the trade. Mr. Clark's idea comes up naturally in connection with such a decision, as that rendered by Judge Dugas, which holds the grocer responsible for and capable of protecting the consumer. If the decision applies to one article it applies to any other that may be adulterated, and there are several whose purity the grocer would have to be a judge of. There are cases to which this decision could be applied in such a way as to prove the necessity for the grocer to be not only an expert in his knowledge of goods, but that he should be something of a chemist. He is made the sponsor for the manufacturer, and he could have no check upon the manufacturer who might leave out some of the truth on his labels, unless he had the means and the special knowledge necessary for analysis. It would be absurd of course to require this of the grocer, but it follows from such deliverances as that of Judge Dugas. Highly trained grocers, though, are none the less desirable, and Mr. Clark's proposal points to one good way of making them more plentiful. The men in the trade make the trade.

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This idea of Mr. Clark's naturally comes to the surface too in a time when honest goods are considered exceptional enough to be worthy of public exhibition and special advertisement, and are being gathered together in leading centres to form Pure Food Expositions. Of course these shows are in the interests of manufacturers, but they appeal to grocers, who should be more or less

qualified to judge of the goods upon their merits. It may not be so practicable as it is desirable that the grocer should be able to detect impurities every time they are present in foods, but it is certain that skilled grocers in the trade to-day are very hard to deceive by untrue representations as to quality and purity. A practical and practicable standard of fitness could be easily got at by taking the average acquirements of the best class of grocers now in the trade as the basis of examination. Let learners be apprentices for a period that would be reasonably long enough for them to make themselves eligible for such examination.

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The training of the embryo grocer would be incomplete however if it fitted him with no more than a knowledge of goods. It should teach him the principles of business, and make both a salesman and a bookkeeper of him. A very large proportion of men in the grocery trade enter the business in utter ignorance of the rudiments of book-keeping. These can charge a customer with what he has not paid for, and are able to agonize a periodical statement of account out of their crude entries, but further than this they are not equipped to go. They may be losing money or making it; the key to an investigation of their affairs is not in their hands. There ought to be some school where this part of the education of grocers would be looked after, and there is no place where it can be so well looked after as in the shop where the learner puts in his first years under a capable principal.

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The medical or legal profession is an organic whole, sufficient in itself for its own regulation, and that fact has much to do with the standing of these professions to-day. If there were more laxity in the conditions which determine admission into law or medicine, there would be less unanimity and less respectability in the professions. Lawyers are grouped into a corporate body, which is the keeper of the good name of its members, and which will expel any who are guilty of dishonorable conduct. The grocery trade could be hardly brought into subjection to such a strong esprit de corps, but it could be brought under the influence of such a useful sentiment.