

Our Trade With China.

In a recent report to the Department of State, United States Consul A. B. Johnson at Amoy gives some interesting information regarding the opportunities for increasing the fruit trade with China, from which we take the following:

"The condition of the fruit crop in China has little or no effect upon the importation. The tropical fruits do not come into competition with the product of the United States; and in the more northern districts, where northern fruits might be grown, the quality of the products, owing to the ignorance or indifference of the people, places them outside the pale of competition with good fruits. The only exception to this rule, possibly, consists of grapes grown in the north of China, some varieties of which are excellent. There is a steadily increasing demand among the natives for foreign fruits, whether canned, dried or preserved. The European population look to these imported fruits almost exclusively to supply their tables. Tinned pears, peaches and apricots come principally from America, while preserved fruits, jams and dried fruits still come largely from Europe.

The American manufacturer will not or does not meet the conditions required. Since there are no peaches or pears in Europe which can compete with those from California, the Oriental merchant has no choice; in other lines he is not so restricted. Prunes and raisins are largely used. The dried fruit is put up in bottles and sealed. In no other way can it be shipped to the tropics without great loss, as the humidity of the climate or insects will soon render it unsalable. No fruits, biscuits, crackers or any other food products can be safely shipped to Central or Southern China without being sealed in glass bottles or tinned. The English or Continental merchants and manufacturers understand this and put up their fruits accordingly. If tinned, the tins are either painted or varnished to prevent rust and consequent loss to the merchant. The American manufacturer has found a market for his product without these extra expenses, and is slow to meet the demand; hence dried fruits, jams and tinned fruits are usually bought in other countries, where these necessary details are looked after. American oatmeal finds little market here except via England, where it is put up in tin boxes of two to four pounds each. If our exporters of fruit expect to hold the market in the Philippines or to gain a better footing in China, they should begin by studying the conditions and promptly meeting them. Prices realized in China for fruits justify the expense necessary to put them up so as to insure their being in good condition when they reach the consumer."—San Francisco Trade Journal.

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