A certain degree of heat destroys these spores. This is why our canned fruit is preserved. The can is sealed up while its contents are so hot as to destroy any spores of putrefactive fungi that may have chanced to fall into it while the can was being filled.

PRESERVATIVE PRECAUTIONS.

But how shall we preserve our fresh fruits? These we cannot heat, nor can we preserve them from infection. Long before they are gathered the spores of putrefaction are upon them, and if we wipe them ever so clean, they are liable to be again infected before they have time to leave our hands. We cannot prevent their final decay, but by the exercise of knowledge and judgment we can greatly prolong their sound condition. The correct understanding and application of a few general laws will prove of great practical value to all who handle fruit.

The stage of maturity of the fruit has much to do with its power to resist decay. Fruit in its last stage of ripeness furnishes upon its surface a favorable soil for putrefactive fungi, while that in a less mature condition exerts a certain degree of resistant power. Fruits should be gathered, therefore, before the last stage of ripeness, and placed under conditions that tend to retard the maturing process, that is, in a low temperature, which not only prevents their rapid ripening, but also greatly checks the development of the fungi of decay.

It is of the utmost importance that the skin of the fruit be unbroken. Nature's protection against decay is in most fruits a surface covered with a thin layer of vegetable wax. If we rupture this, the germs have free access to the moist and delicate tissues beneath, which have very little resistant power, and decay quickly results. The preventive in this case, as every one who gathers or packs fruit should know, is *careful handling*.

It is important that the surface of the fruit be kept dry, and this involves more care than many suppose. It is not always enough that the fruit be dry on the surface when gathered or when placed in the storage room.

A MATTER OF TEMPERATURE.

Will it remain dry? This is a question that does not always occur to the fruit man, and because he does not understand the principles involved, his fruit often fails to keep. Much depends upon the relative temperature of the fruit, and of the atmosphere of the storage room at the time the fruit is placed in storage. Suppose a package of warm fruit from the orchard or berry field, where the temperature is 80°, be placed in a cool storage room with a temperature of 45°, what results? A knowledge of the laws of the deposition of dew will tell us that as the fruit cools down to the temperature of the room, the moisture contained in the air between the fruits is likely to become condensed and deposited in a thin layer over the service of the fruit. This is sure to be the case whenever the temperature of the storage room is below the "dew-points" of the external air at the