

or 25 years ago was a regular plague, as it would strike down 25 or 30 men in a shanty composed of 40 individuals.

Nowadays, we meet almost every spring with a certain number of cases, but it has become a good deal less common, and shows a tendency to disappear. What is the cause of this consoling diminution? Formerly, our forests, so rich in wood, were poor in settlers. Food intended for the shantymen was exclusively bought in cities, and consisted of salt pork and beans. As clearings allowed settlers to establish themselves, farms were created on almost every limit. On these farms, vegetables are being cultivated, especially potatoes, with which the shantymen can easily be supplied for their alimentation. Those who are to-day the victims of scurvy are those who winter in the remotest parts, away from established settlements. Do you know to what treatment we subject these unfortunate patients suffering from black-leg? We actually stuff them with potatoes and other fresh vegetables, and in a few weeks they are perfectly cured.

The general opinion to-day is that scurvy proceeds from the privation of vegetables, and that these vegetables possess anti-scorbutic properties, owing to the salts of potassium they contain. Here it is curious enough to remark, that these salts of potassium exist in vegetables in a special chemical state which causes all their efficacy. In fact, mutton contains by ounce 0.846 of salts of potash, and besides, you are aware that the pork destined to shantymen is generally salted with nitrate of potash. Still, in spite of this alimentation, scurvy soon appears. What can be the reason of this apparent contradiction?

Here it is: Salts of potash in food, as all the mineral salts, must be introduced on determinate chemical forms in order that these principles may be fixed in sufficient quantity by the functions of assimilation. Thus, phosphate, nitrate of potash, and chloride of potassium traverse the whole system, and are expelled almost entire through the excretions and secretions of the body. These salts are stable. On the contrary, in a combination of potassium with an organic acid, such as the citrates, nitrates and tartrates, the organic acid is decomposed, giving up carbonic acid, and the economy finding itself in possession of a salt of little stability, nutrition takes up and utilizes its base. Fresh green vegetables contain potash combined with organic acids, which