

potato, with a specific gravity of less than 1068, may be regarded as bad.

Dry peas on keeping become pale, shrivelled, and hard; but they keep better thus than as meal, which is very liable to become mouldy. Whole or in meal peas are susceptible to the attacks of insects. The accarus, a sort of itch insect, may be well defined with a pocket lens.

There is good ground for believing that all tinned fruits and Vegetables, and also meat, poultry, and fish, are more or less contaminated with tin, the amount present being from one-tenth of a grain to about $1\frac{1}{3}$ grains per pound, and, according to some esti-

mates, much more. Fortunately, the metal is not known to be poisonous, except in large doses. Green peas and French beans, and some other preserved green vegetables, and pickles, are frequently deliberately adulterated with copper, and this metal is undoubtedly injurious to the health of the consumer. The presence of copper can be detected by leaving the blade of a penknife in the liquor round the vegetables for a short time. The copper will deposit itself on the blade.
—FRANCIS VACHER, MED. HEALTH OFFICE OF BIRKENHEAD, in the *Sanitary Record*, London, E.

THE INCREASE OF NERVOUS DISEASES.

The peril of the race from the increase of the neuropathic diathesis should set us all to thinking, and those who have the authority of acting in the direction of self-preservation and indirectly of the ultimate life of the nation. The multiplication of hospitals for the insane and inebriate asylums and of schools for the feeble-minded, and improved methods of treating nervous diseases and of homes for impoverished neuropaths of every grade, from the hospital for nervous diseases proper to the almshouse where many of these wrecks are lodged, does not cure the evil, though they serve to hide it somewhat from public sight. We best provide against the spread of smallpox by general vaccination, not by numerous pest houses, so by general preventive sanitation can we avert the threatening spread of the now prevalent and growing disease of the nervous system.

The neuropathic diathesis, the insane constitution that breeds its like and burdens the state with hereditary imbecility, idiocy, insanity, deaf-mutism, and the lesser degrees of mental defect, must be made the subject of statutory enactment and enforced law; sentimentality must yield to fact; the teachings of nature must be as decided and as sternly enforced as her own unerring edicts are. Why should the drunkard and

epileptic be permitted to beget a race of imbeciles, epileptics, idiots or criminals? Why should the life-long criminal and the pauper be allowed to go on reproducing his defective kind, the lunatic likewise, and all the mentally maimed of whatever degree, especially when by forfeiture of liberty they fall under proper custody of the law; and why should generation after generation of these miseries be allowed to be brought into being to become either burdens upon the state or victims of its misdirected vengeance, when prevention is possible, and better for the state, and only justice to the helpless and prematurely doomed to an unchosen existence worse than death? If municipalities may lawfully quarantine yellow fever and cholera, why may not, and why ought not, this greater destructive agency that plague or pestilence, which never ceases its ravages—the hereditary descent of the organically vicious and defective—be stopped by law? No pestilence, that ever walked in darkness or destruction that has wasted at noonday has done greater harm to mankind than the silent, ever active destructive power of hereditary degeneracy of brain and mind. Instead of visiting punishment on the heads of these weakened victims of entailed disease, let law go to the *fons et origo*, and stop this vicious progeny from being thrown upon a