

animal affected with a disease, either communicable or in some other way injurious to man, or from a poisoned animal.

1. Partial decomposition is shown mainly by the characteristic smell. The meat, too, loses its elasticity, is soft, and tears readily. On cutting, the resistance offered to the knife varies, some parts being softer than others. The cut surface often swells from a kind of fermentation or 'heating.' The outside is pale and livid, at a later stage greenish. Litmus paper is not reddened, but remains neutral, or indicates the juices are alkaline.

2. Meat from animals which have not been killed or only killed when moribund, is dark in colour, often purple. The meat sets badly, is full of blood, neutral or alkaline, and readily decomposes. The flaying and dressing of such animals is usually done under unfavourable circumstances, and often by no expert hands, so that the carcase look hacked and blood-stained and untidy.

3. Meat from animals affected with disease and thus injurious to man.—The detection and seizing of such meat is one of the most trying duties of sanitary officers. Determining whether meat is sound or decomposing, or whether it is well-bled or has the blood in it, are comparatively simple matters, and not beyond the intelligence of most housewives; but judging whether meat is from a diseased animal, the nature of the disease, and whether it affords warrant for the seizing of the meat will tax the officer's capacity to the full. There are three things he should do to prepare himself for this work:—first, he must acquire the necessary knowledge; next, he must train himself to observe closely; and thirdly he must cultivate the judicial faculty so as to be able to interpret rightly what he sees.

Good poultry should be firm to the touch, pink or yellowish in colour, should be fairly plump, and a strong skin. It has a fresh, not disagreeable smell. Stale poultry loses its firmness, becomes bluish in colour, green over the crop and abdomen, the skin readily breaks, and the bird has a disagreeable

odour, not at all difficult to recognize.

The freshness of fish is indicated by its being firm and stiff. In really prime condition, if held out in a horizontal position by the hand, it will remain rigid. Any drooping of the tail shows that it is not quite fresh, and, indeed, the extent of this drooping may not unfairly be taken as a measure of want of freshness in the fish. The fish usually hawked about the streets is what the shops have failed to sell, and much of it is very limp. However, before an officer is justified in seizing fish, it must be a stage beyond being merely unfresh. If the fish besides being limp is actually softened in parts, and if it has a distinctly disagreeable odour, there is sufficient evidence of commencing decomposition to warrant seizure. Healthy pilchards and herrings, and many other fishes, and mussels and oysters, even when in season, may occasionally, on being eaten, produce symptoms of poisoning. Attempts to isolate the poison in such cases have failed and it is thought the fish may themselves have been feeding on unwholesome food. There is certainly nothing to distinguish such fish from others. At times when the salmon disease is prevalent, it is not unlikely that fish affected with the disease might be sent to the market. The disease is due to a parasite, the visible signs of its being a fungus growth, especially about the head, which, so to speak, eats its way into the sound flesh. A sanitary officer would be warranted in seizing a fish thus affected.

Fruit may be the subject of disease, or in a state of decay, or it may be so unripe (especially in the case of early windfall apples) as to justify seizure. Diseased or decaying fruit is known by softening, change of colour, and external mould. Fruit may be bird-bitten or insect-bitten and none the worse, except that it is disfigured.

Potatoes and all fresh vegetables may also be the subject of disease or decay; and either softening or discoloration, or both, will mark the parts affected. Good potatoes are firm, the colour is pale and uniform, and the juice is acid. Inferior potatoes are best known by their lightness: thus a