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LECTURE
ON
VEGETARIANISM.

BY EMERITUS PROFESSOR F. W. NEWMAN.

[*Delivered at Gloucester, December 2, 1870; Mr. Price, M.P., in the Chair,
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LECTURE ON VEGETARIANISM,

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“WHAT shall we eat?” is really a question of first importance: but it is seldom so treated. In general, the rich eat what they like, and the poor what they can; neither the one nor the other studies what is best. Besides, there is a perverse influence at work of which few seem to be aware. Rich men are ashamed to give cheap food to their friends, even when the cheap is better than the dear. London sprats are, in the opinion of many, superior to Greenwich whitebait: yet those who eat sprats in private, and prefer them, dare not offer them to their friends, because they are cheap. This does but illustrate a pervading principle. It is a baneful folly to think, that what is rare, what is difficult, and what is out of season, is best. And when the richer, who can well afford it, aim at expensive food because it is expensive, the poorer, who ill afford it, imitate them, and get worse food at greater cost. I cannot treat the subject of food, unless you will, at least for a little while, consent to look at things with fresh eyes, and refuse to be blinded by fashion and routine.

I have called my lecture Vegetarianism; but, as the word does not wholly explain itself, you may justly ask me for its meaning. Many suppose it to mean, a diet consisting of table vegetables. It is true, that these are an essential part of Vegetarian diet, yet they are by no means the most important. Vegetarian food consists mainly of four heads—farinacea, pulse, fruit, and table vegetables.

1. The foremost is *farinacea*; they are the “staff of life.” They are chiefly wheat, barley, oats, maize, perhaps rye; also potatoes, yams, rice and sago, tapioca, and such like. Vegetarians seldom endure baker’s bread; they always become fastidious about bread, as teetotalers about water; and very often prefer unleavened cakes, as Scotch scones, or biscuits not too hard; else, macaroni, also oatmeal porridge. The makers of aerated bread find that four per cent of the material is wasted in fermentation. Besides, we have delicious Oswego or rice blanchmange, or it may be hominy and frumenty. I guarantee to you all, that no one loses a taste for nice things, by vegetarian food, however cheap.

2. Under *pulse* we practically understand peas, beans, and lentils. They have excellent feeding qualities, but also a particular defect, which is chiefly remedied by onions adequately mixed.

3. The word *fruit* speaks for itself; only it may be well to add that the dearer fruits are just of the least importance for food. Apples might be much cheaper than they are; and no fruit is more universally serviceable. The cheaper figs, French, Italian, and Spanish, are less cloying and more feeding than the luscious Smyrna fig of the shops. Raisins and dates are now supplied in cheerful abundance. But peculiarly, as I believe, nuts are undervalued as substantial food. We do them great injustice. We put them on the table as dessert, to be eaten when the stomach

is full, and then slander them as indigestible, because the stomach groans under an excess of nutriment. We call them heavy, because they are nutritious. In Syria, walnuts and coarse dry figs make an admirable meal. Filberts I count better than walnuts, and Brazil nuts better still. Chestnuts have the disadvantage of needing to be cooked, and being hard to cook uniformly well; but when rightly dressed, perhaps of all nuts accessible in England they are the most valuable. Cocoanuts, when we are wiser, will be better applied, than to tempt a jaded appetite to hurtful indulgence. Almonds are too dear to be available as food; yet concerning almonds, a physician who is no Vegetarian gave me interesting information the other day. "No man," said he, "need starve on a journey, who can fill his waistcoat pocket with almonds. If you crush almonds thoroughly and duly mix them with water, no chemist in Europe can distinguish the substance from milk, and milk we regard as the most perfect food." This suggests moreover, that nuts, to become wholesome, must be very thoroughly crushed and bitten. As to other fruits, I barely add; that the delicious grape, noblest of the fruits in our latitude, will be hereafter redeemed by teetotalers from corruption, and will become a general food. But no fruit must be eaten for amusement, and taken on a full stomach; or it will not be food at all.

4. A few words on table vegetables. Potatoes and pulse I have noticed, and now pass them by. Mushrooms are by far the most delicious, and abound with nitrogen; a rare advantage: but we have them too seldom in the market. On the whole I regard those vegetables to be most important which supply flavour or correct defects in other food; pre-eminently the tribe of onions, also celery, parsley, sage, savory, mint, with the foreign articles ginger and pepper. Onions and celery we do not cook half enough; indeed cabbage and cauliflower are eaten half raw by the English; on which account we do not know their value. Much the same may be said of what the farmer calls roots, *i.e.*, turnips, carrots, parsnips, beet. Do not think that I despise any of these, when I insist that this class of food stands only fourth. One who confines himself to these four heads of diet is indisputably a Vegetarian.

Yet in fact few Vegetarians do confine themselves to this diet, and herein consists my difficulty in definition. We are open to the scoff of being, not Vegetarians, but Brahmins, who do not object to animal food, but only to the taking of animal life. Few of us refuse eggs, or milk and its products. This is highly illogical, if we seek consistency with an abstract theory. I do not shut my eyes to it. The truth is, that in cookery we need some grease, and it is hard to eat dry bread without butter or cheese. Our climate does not hitherto produce oils. It is not easy to buy oil delicate enough for food, and oil (to most Englishmen) is offensive, from tasting like degenerate butter. Cheese, like nuts, is maligned as indigestible, barely because it is heaped on a full stomach. However, since most Vegetarians admit eggs and milk, I define the diet as consisting of food which is substantially the growth of the earth, without animal slaughter. If you prefer to call this Brahminism, I will not object. It is a respectable name.

We shall all admit that the food which is *natural* to man is best for man; but we are not agreed how to find out what is natural. I cannot wholly accede to the students of comparative anatomy, that the line of argument which they adopt is decisive; yet it is well to know what it is, and how far it carries us. They assume that as in wild animals we see instinct unperverted, and as such instinct is a test of what is natural, we have to compare the structure of the human teeth and

digestive apparatus with those of brutes, and thereby learn what is natural to man. Since unluckily certain sharp teeth of ours are called *canine*, superficial inquirers jumped to the conclusion that our teeth were made to rend flesh; and on discovering that the alimentary canal of the sheep is much longer than of the lion, longer also than of the man, they inferred that we are not naturally herbivorous, but carnivorous. Vegetarians easily refute these arguments. They reply, that our sharp teeth are ill-called *canine*, for they do not lap over one another. Such teeth are larger and stronger in the ape than in the man. I believe they are chiefly useful to crack nuts, of which monkeys are very fond. Be this as it may, no monkey naturally eats flesh; if even, when tame, some may be coaxed into eating it. And it is undeniable that the digestive apparatus of the monkey comes very near to that of the man: hence Vegetarians generally infer that flesh meat is unnatural to us. The same thing follows from the doctrine of the old naturalists, who thought the pig and the man to have marked similarities; but wild swine certainly will not eat flesh, therefore man ought not. As to the length of the alimentary canal, there also the Vegetarians are easily triumphant. The length of it in the man, as in the monkey, is between two extremes, the lion and the sheep; therefore the human constitution for food is *intermediate*. Man is neither herbivorous, as the sheep and horse, nor carnivorous, as the lion; but is frugivorous, as the monkey.

There is another argument of Vegetarians which I must not omit, though I do not undertake to say how much it proves. They allege that carnivorous animals never sweat, but man certainly does sweat; therefore he is not carnivorous. Here I feel myself uncertain as to fact. Carnivorous animals, made to prowl by night, have thick loose skins for defence against cold and wet, even in hot climates. In consequence sweat would not easily relieve them from internal heat. How is it with the sheep? can they sweat? I find I do not know. But in truth this whole side of argument from the comparison of animals seems to me but of secondary value. We cannot find by it what is *natural* to us; for, universally, you cannot find out the characteristics of the higher being by studying the lower being. The assumption that you can is the main cause why external philosophy gravitates into materialism and atheism. The specific difference of man and brute lies in the human mind; and this, at once and manifestly, has an essential bearing on the question of human food. No known animal lights a fire, or fosters a fire when lighted. However tender their affections, however warm their gratitude or their resentment, however wonderful their self-devotion, however they may deserve our fond protection and our reciprocal gratitude, there is not one that understands the relation of fuel to fire; therefore there is not one that can cook. On this account the old logicians called man "the cooking animal;" and though, happily, this description does not exhaust the capacity of our nature, it affords (on the lower side of nature) a sufficient criterion, distinguishing us from all known brutes. Without our power of cookery, we could not make half the use that we do of *Vegetarian* food. What would a potato be to us uncooked? I fear it might turn out to be a narcotic poison, like the potato-apple. Of how little avail would onions and cauliflower, turnips and beans, or even corn itself, be without fire? We can no more conceive of man without power of cooking than of man without power of sowing, reaping, and grinding. It may fairly be maintained by the advocate of flesh eating that if it pleased the Creator to develop the gorilla's brain, and give him a little more good sense, without altering his digestive organs or his teeth, the creature would begin by roasting chestnuts and broiling mushrooms, and go on to discover that roast

flesh has many of the qualities of those princely fungi, in whose praises enthusiastic votaries rave to us. Now, if I have to admit that a gorilla might perhaps become a flesh-eater, if he had only the wit to cook, you may think that I abandon the cause of Vegetarianism. Nay; but my cause is so strong that I can afford not to overstrain a single argument.

If man had not the power of cooking, and had a natural incapacity for eating raw flesh, his command of food would be so limited, that he could not have over-spread the earth as he has done. He certainly never could have found food in arctic regions; scarcely would he have found it adequate for his sustenance in the temperate zone, when he alighted on a country covered with forest and swamp. The operations of agriculture require long time and much co-operation before a wild land can be tamed; and meanwhile, on what is the first cultivator to live? We know what has been the course of history in nearly all countries. Only in a few, as China, India, Assyria, Egypt, the banks of the great navigable rivers, with alluvial or inundated land, gave such facility to the sower, that there is not even tradition of the time when tillage began. But in general, wild men in a wild country ate whatever they could get,—or get most easily. In the woods wild game abounded—everywhere something, though varying from continent to continent. Besides birds innumerable, endless tribes of antelope and deer in one place, of kine in another,—whether the cow or the buffalo or the bison—of sheep in a third, allured the hunter; and cookery made the flesh of all eatable. We certainly *can* eat uncooked oysters. It is dangerous to deny that savage stomachs, when half-starved, could live on raw flesh and raw fish. But whether it be cause or effect, the tribes which have come nearest to this state have been either very degenerate or very primitive specimens of humanity. If very primitive, they do but display *undeveloped* man, and they are the smallest fraction of the human race. The second stage in human civilization, is, to rear tame cattle; if there are wild animals capable of being tamed. In the old world the sheep, the cow, the reindeer, or the buffalo became domesticated, tame out of mind; also the camel; and in South America the llama; but the bison of North America, it seems, is untameable, so that the pastoral state did not there develop itself. The transition from pasture to agriculture is a serious difficulty. To defend crops is most arduous; in fact, is impossible to the private cultivator, unless he is armed with formidable weapons of war which the savage cannot get. Agriculture must ordinarily be, in the first instance, the act of the tribe collectively, and the crops be their common property, protected by their joint force. Until there is a powerful public executive, armed to defend private property, agriculture is too dangerous for an individual. On this account certain tribes have abhorred cultivation and fixed dwellings, as exposing the industrious man to slavery under marauders. Thus the Nabatheans of old, thus Jonadab the son of Rechab, forbade their children to build houses, or sow seed, or plant vines, because it interfered with wild liberty. Tribes who live by hunting only, need a vast space of land in which their game may live quietly; from a small area it would quickly be frightened away: hence such tribes have always been a very sparse population, and insignificant in the world's history. Those who live by pasturage, driving their flocks and herds from place to place, and building no houses, have generally been marauders: indeed the Tartars and Scythians, who used the waggon as their home, in all earlier ages were the great military nations, the conquerors of the more civilised. Though they might begin by living on the flesh and milk of their cattle, they soon learned to

obtain grain, either by cultivating it themselves (for they were strong enough to protect it) or by purchasing it from neighbours by giving cattle in exchange or by extorting it as tribute from peaceful but weaker cultivators. And in proportion as they lived on grain, they were capable of becoming more populous; thus population became denser, step by step, as flesh meat was superseded by wheat and barley, by maize and rice. In the far north, where Finns and Lapps dwell almost side by side, the Lapps feed as of old, on the products of the sea, or on the milk and flesh of the reindeer; but the Finns have introduced corn culture, and live upon grain. The Finns are the stronger, larger, and handsomer men. At any rate their diet has agreed with them, even in that latitude; but I do not mean to say that men may not retain perfect health and strength on either food, so far as health can be tested by the surgeon. The ancient Germans practised but little agriculture, says Cæsar. By intercourse with Rome, especially on the Roman frontier, they became cultivators. In our own island, as we well know, agriculture has existed before Saxon times; but at the Norman conquest, and long after, the land devoted to cattle or left in a state of nature vastly predominated. In those days the poorest ate much more flesh meat than now. There has been a continual diminution of flesh meat, and far larger supplies of Vegetarian food. This is neither from unjust institutions nor from unfair taxation; but it is a normal result of increased population. It is inevitable on an island, sensibly limited in size: for to produce as much human food as *one* acre of cultivated land will yield, *three* or even *four* acres of grazing land are needed. That era had its own disadvantages. The cattle had then little winter food; they were killed and salted down in the close of autumn. Much salt meat and salt fish was eaten, and fresh vegetables were few in species and scarce. Parsnips are said to have been long the only root, before there were turnips or carrots: potatoes, we know, came in from America. Native fruit was very limited, and our climate was thought hardly capable of bearing more sorts; foreign fruit was not in the market. Now, what I want to point out, is this: that *the diet of flesh meat belongs to the time of barbarism—the time of low cultivation and thin population; and that it naturally, normally, decreases with higher cultivation.* We see the same thing in ancient civilisation and modern. The Brahmins in India, who stood at the head in intellect and in beauty, were wholly or prevalently Vegetarians. I believe, much the same was true of ancient Egypt. Men of lower caste ate flesh, and the lowest most: and among these principally foul diseases of the skin prevailed; no doubt, because, where population is dense, the poorer classes, if they eat flesh meat at all, are sure to get a sensible portion of their supply diseased and unwholesome.

And now let me say, *what* is the true test of anything being *natural* to man. He is a progressive being; you must test it by his more mature, not by his immature era; by his civilisation, not by his barbarism. Flesh meat helped him through his less developed state; it then existed around him in superfluity, while vegetarian food was scarce; moreover, the beasts slain for food were then generally in a natural and healthy condition. But to attempt to keep up in the later and more developed stage the habits of the earlier and ruder is in many ways pernicious. At first each man kills his own game, or slaughters a beast of his own flock; and long after that time is passed, the animals wander in the field or mountain, or under the forest. The pig eats beech-nuts and oakmast and horse-chestnuts. The steer browses on soft leaves and on grass. There is no stuffing with oilcake, no stall-feeding nor indoors life. The beast of the field abides in the field. When the herds abound, and the supply is easily adequate to the human

population, the market is not likely to be tampered with. Neither roguery, nor artificial management of the animal is to be feared. Great Oriental communities put the slaughter of cattle for food under religious regulation. With the Jews, and indeed with the earliest Romans, the butcher was a priest; and anxious distinctions were made of clean and unclean beasts, to exclude the eating of such flesh as either was supposed to be unwholesome or was forbidden for some economic reason. Now in fact,—owing, as I believe, to the great pressure for milk in a populous nation,—the cow is of a peculiarly feeble constitution with us. This is manifest in her liability to suffer severely in calving, which is certainly a striking phenomenon. But surely it is only what might be expected from the very artificial and unnatural demand that we make on her, to give us milk in quantity far beyond anything needed for her calf, and for a length of time so prolonged. So intimate is the relation of calving to milk-giving that to overstrain one side of the female system must naturally derange the other. But to this is added stall-feeding and cramming, instead of the open field and natural herbage. Though these practices may save money to the grazier and produce more pounds of meat and of unhealthy fat, they cannot conduce to the robustness of the animal, nor of the man who eats it. A worse thing is now revealed. I lately read in a newspaper that many farmers believe they have found out the cause of what is called the foot and mouth disease; namely, they ascribe it to the fact that the animals are bred from parents too young. Now I lay no stress on their *opinion* that they have here discovered the cause of that disease. Their opinion may be erroneous, but they cannot be mistaken in what they state as a fact; namely, that in eagerness to supply the meat market, and gain the utmost return to their capital, they artificially bring about a premature breeding of the cattle. The moment it is mentioned, one sees what the temptation must be to a breeder; one sees also that the offspring is sure to be feeble, and therefore liable to any or every disease. It is well known that in Bengal, for religious reasons, the Brahmin girls are prevalently married at a very tender age, so that great numbers of mothers are hardly more than children themselves; and to this is ascribed the peculiar delicacy and frequent small stature in such classes. I do not assume that such offspring need be unhealthy; but unless protected as only men can be protected, if exposed as cattle must be exposed, one must expect them to catch any epidemic that may be abroad, and more and more to propagate feebleness. Municipal law struggles in vain against such tricks of the market. They go on for many years without the persons who practise them being aware of their harm. Prohibitions are hard to execute; they are sure to come too late; and after they are enacted, some new artifice equally bad grows up. While the pressure for flesh-meat is great, unless the Government will take into its own hands both the slaughtering and the sales, it seems impossible to keep the *sausage* trade under control. In last Monday's *Daily News* I see there is a man to be brought to trial for boiling up old horses for sausage meat. There is nothing intrinsically wrong in that, if it were avowed to be horse-flesh; but since all is done by stealth, evidently far more horrid substances are likely to enter the market.

The United States have a vast abundance of soil, a very thin population: hence they might, like our ancestors, have flesh meat and milk of a natural kind. But they have large towns, to be fed on a great scale by enterprising capitalists; so that many of the same evils grow up among them as with us. In New York a distiller of spirits added to his trade the trade of cowkeeping, having learned that cows, fed upon the refuse grains of a distillery, give more milk. It is true that they do; but

the milk is inferior in quality; and the cows gradually become diseased—whether by the food, or by the unwholesome confinement in the cellars beneath the distillery, I cannot say. But the complaints of the milk are bitter: moreover, the cowkeepers in the country around have followed the evil example; and it is positively stated that the mortality of children in New York is enormous; which is a suspicious coincidence. These are but single instances and illustrations of the evils to which we are exposed, from the tampering of the grazier with the animals in whose flesh or milk he deals.

But I return to my point. With the progress of population Vegetarianism naturally increases. I do not say, which is cause, and which is effect: they react on one another. When more food is wanted, and the price of corn rises, there is a motive to break up new land. Pasture is diminished. Perhaps by artificial grasses and by cultivation of roots the quantity of cattle is nevertheless sustained; yet if the process goes on, as in China (for an extreme case), the larger cattle will not at all increase in proportion to the population. Nor indeed among ourselves has it increased proportionally. The English roast beef that foreigners talk of is rarely indeed the diet of our villagers. Thirty years ago even our town artisans ate little flesh meat. Bacon, principally fat, was nearly the sole animal food consumed by our peasants, whose state has but little altered. They may almost be called Vegetarians; for fat, like oil, supplies only animal heat, not the substance of muscle. Nevertheless, it is now taught, that on animal heat vital force depends, which muscle will not give.

Now lest you should pity our peasants too much, I must state that we have the decisive testimony of the most eminent scientific men to the sufficiency of a purely Vegetarian diet; men, not themselves Vegetarians, nor intending to urge the practice. Our society has printed a handbill, with extracts from Haller, Liebig, Linnæus, Gassendi, Professor Lawrence, Professor Owen, Baron Cuvier, and many others. Hear a few illustrations how those speak, who mean to be our opponents. Dr. S. Brown writes: "We are ready to admit that Vegetarian writers have triumphantly proved, that *physical horse-like* strength is not only compatible with, but also favoured by, a well-chosen diet from the vegetable kingdom, and likewise, that such a table is conducive to length of days." Dr. W. B. Carpenter writes: "We freely concede to the advocates of Vegetarianism, that as regards the endurance of physical labour there is ample proof of the capacity of [their diet] to afford the requisite sustenance." He adds that if it is sufficiently oily, "it will maintain the powers of the body at their highest natural elevation, even under exposure to the extreme of cold." Thus the labourer, according to these high authorities, is not at all dependent on flesh meat. And of this we have abundant proof in foreign nations. We have no stronger men among our flesh-dieted "navvies" than the African negroes of the U.S. who were fed, while slaves, on yams, maize, and other vegetable food. We perhaps cannot anywhere produce a class of men to equal the porters of Constantinople. The London *Spectator*, not long back (though it is anything but Vegetarian in purpose) wondered at the ignorance of men who doubted whether Vegetarian food was compatible with the greatest strength; for a Constantinople porter (said the writer) would not only easily carry the load of any English porter, but would carry off the man besides. Mr. Winwood Reade, a surgeon who has travelled much in Africa; Mr. A. F. Kennedy, once Governor of Sierra Leone, and Captain P. Eardley Wilmot, attest that the Kroomen of Western Africa are eminent in endurance. Mr. Kennedy says "their power and endurance exceeds that of any race with which I am acquainted." Mr. Winwood Reade expresses himself even

more pointedly: "The Kroomen are, I believe, the strongest men in the world." Yet the Krooman, he adds, lives on a few handfuls of rice per day; and rice has not been supposed by our chemists to be at all favourable to human strength. They depreciated it, as giving too great a proportion of animal heat; but they did not know that animal heat gives vital force also. It may be said, that these cases belong to hot climates; but indeed Constantinople can be anything but hot. And we can further appeal to Northern Persia, where the winter is intensely cold. The English officers at Tabriz, the northern capital,—who for a long series of years had the drilling of Persian troops,—were enthusiastic in their praises, and testified that they make the longest marches, on nothing but bread, cheese, and water, carrying three or four days' provisions in their sash. These, however, are not strictly Persians, but of Turkoman race. I did not need to go to Persia for illustration. The Italians of the north, or anywhere on the Apennines, would have served my argument. Bread, with figs or raisins, are their sufficient food; and they were old Napoleon's hardest soldiers round Moscow. Indeed, in every civilised country the strongest class of men are the peasants, who are everywhere all but Vegetarians. Dr. E. Smith, who reported to the Privy Council on the food of the three kingdoms, comes to the conclusion that the Irish are the strongest, next to them the Scotch, next the northern English; after the southern peasants; lowest of all, the townsman; and that their Vegetarianism is graduated in the same way, the strongest being the most Vegetarian, and the townsfolk, who are the weakest, being the greatest eaters of flesh. I do not mean to assert that the diet is the only cause of strength or weakness: it is sufficient to insist that Vegetarianism is compatible with the highest strength. The old Greek athlete was a Vegetarian: Hercules, according to their comic poets, lived chiefly on pease pudding.

But what of health? The testimony of scientific men is here still more remarkable. Haller, the great physiologist, writes thus: "This food then, in which flesh has no part, is salutary, inasmuch as it fully nourishes a man, protracts life to an advanced period, and prevents or cures such disorders as are attributable to the acrimony or grossness of the blood." That eminent physician, Dr. Cheyne of Dublin, who some forty years ago was at the head of his profession, declared: "For those who are extremely broken down with chronic disease I have found no other relief than a total abstinence from all animal food, and from all sorts of strong and fermented liquors. In about thirty years' practice, in which I have (in some degree or other) advised this method in proper cases, I have had but two cases in whose total recovery I have been mistaken." A remarkable instance is attested,—that of Professor Fergusson, the historian,—who at the age of sixty-one had a dangerous attack of paralysis. He called in his friend Dr. Black, the celebrated discoverer of latent heat. Dr. Black, though not a Vegetarian, prescribed total abstinence from flesh-meat. Professor Fergusson obeyed, and not only recovered entirely and never had a second attack, but was a remarkably vigorous old man at ninety, and died at ninety-three.* In such cases I think we have an explanation of the success of some things called quack remedies,—as, the *grape-cure* of the Germans. I am ready to believe that it is not so much the grapes that cure, as the abstinence from a gross and evil diet. Dr. A. P. Buchan teaches that a diet of farinacea, with milk and fruits, is the most hopeful way of curing pulmonary consumption: many examples of such cure in an early stage of the disease, says he, are recorded. He adds: "If vegetables and milk were more used in diet, we

* A gentleman present corrected 93 into 95.

should have less scurvy, and likewise fewer putrid and inflammatory fevers." Drs. Craigie and Cullen are very strong as to the power of Vegetarianism to preserve one from gout. Drs. Marcet, Oliver, and other physiologists, declare that human chyle, elaborated from flesh meat, putrifies in three or four days at longest; while chyle from vegetable food, from its greater purity and more perfect vitality, may be kept for many days without becoming putrid. We need not therefore wonder that Vegetarians are so little liable to fever, or to any form of putrid disease. It is asserted, indeed, that such a thing is not known, as that a Vegetarian should suffer cholera. On the other hand, it is also asserted that none but Vegetarians have attained the age of 100: undoubtedly a *majority* of centenarians have held to this diet.

Now I know some persons will answer quick: "I do not want to live to a 100;" but remember, I pray you, what such longevity implies. The man who lives to a 100 is generally as strong at eighty, and as perfect in all his faculties, as are the majority of men at sixty-five; and he is not as much worn out at ninety as the man who lives to eighty-two or eighty-three is at eighty. It is not the last seven years, of the centenarian which give him advantage, but the twenty years which precede these seven. However, wish what you please about long life; it remains, that long life, if it exist in a class of men, implies that that class excels in vital force; is superior therefore in health, probably in strength; and health is more valuable than strength. Once more; reflect what is contained in the avowal that pulmonary consumption is best treated, and is sometimes cured, by abstinence from flesh-meat and wine. Consumption is notoriously a disease of weakness. Hence we must infer that more strength is given by Vegetarian diet than by that which is called stimulating. All the arguments converge to the same point. Vital force is measured by length of life, and by power of recovering from dangerous wounds. Vegetarianism conduces at once to length of life, and to success in such recovery. I have mentioned that Dr. Cheyne and Dr. Black trusted in it as a recipe when the constitution was broken down; how much more must it be a preservative of strength to the healthy? Dr. S. Nicolls, of the Longford Fever Hospital, wrote in 1864, after sixteen years' experience in the hospital, that the success of treatment by a total withdrawal of flesh-meat and of alcoholic liquors gave him the greatest satisfaction. The long and short is, that whatever is inflammatory is weakening; the highest vigour is got out of that food and drink which gives the maximum of nutrition and the minimum of inflammation. We allow ourselves to be cheated by calling inflammation *stimulus*. Further, I will ask, of the English race, what portion is most unhealthy? Beyond question, the English of the United States. And they are also the greatest flesh-eaters.

Now let me add a word concerning the North American Indian. It is long since a few of the tribes introduced the cultivation of maize, ascribed to Hiawatha in Longfellow's poem. The Cherokees adopted an agricultural life while yet in Georgia; but the distant and the roaming tribes continue to depend on hunting, and even their boys and girls must live chiefly on flesh. How solid is the national constitution is strikingly shown in the strength of the women, who, in the journeyings of a tribe, if visited by child-birth, need but half-a-day's rest, and then start on the march, carrying the infant on their back. I lately read a letter from the well-known Mrs. Lydia Maria Child, in which she details how an Indian woman trudged to Mrs. Child's house through many miles of deep snow, and next day came the same journey, carrying an infant which she had brought to light in the

interval. The vigour and activity of the Indian continues unimpaired till within a short time (perhaps till within a fortnight) of natural death, when he is made aware of weakness and death approaching. Now some one might quote these facts as a clear testimony to the value of a flesh diet; but against it there are two drawbacks. If disease arise in an Indian, it is apt to be exceedingly violent; smallpox may carry off a whole tribe; they seem to be very inflammatory; but I speak under correction. Further, no one attributes to them peculiarly long life. They are said to die worn out at eighty. Again, I do not speak confidently; for it is hard to be sure of facts. Yet I believe they are less longlived, and recover worse from disease than the Vegetarian Africans dwelling on the same land; less longlived also than the Arabs, who live more on milk and less on meat. On the whole, I think that life in the open air, a cautious choice of healthy places for encamping, and consequent purity of blood, gives to those men and women their great robustness. All food comes alike to such stomachs, as regards its power of nourishing; but if the flesh meat produces a more inflammable habit, it shortens natural life, as well as intensifies disease.

I have tried your patience long, in the attempt to develop facts. It remains to draw my conclusion. I first have to insist, that ever since 1847, we have been striving to reverse the natural current of affairs—an enterprize which will necessarily entail disease and a vast train of calamity. In the first 45 years of this century, the population of the three kingdoms more than doubled itself in spite of emigration. Great areas of land were broken up for cultivation, partly under the allurements of a high price for corn, partly to take advantage of the Tithe Commutation Act. But after the abolition of the Corn Laws in 1847, the increased prosperity of the manufacturing towns led, not only to an importation of corn, but also to a remarkable demand of the artizan population for flesh-meat. Cattle were brought from abroad in great numbers. Prices still went up. A great stimulus was given to cattle-breeding. The markets of England were supplied from Scotland and Ireland as well as from foreign ports, until in Ireland land was thrown out of culture, and taken up for grazing. The clamour for flesh continuing, we bring it from Australia and from South America, artificially preserved. From importing instead of raising food, our worst evils are increased. Rustic industry is not developed. The new births of the country can find no employment there, and flock into towns. Masses of population become liable to starvation from a displacement of foreign markets, or from the imprudence of their employers; and when personal prudence has less reward, improvidence prevails. Town-life is less robust; sanitary conditions are harder to fulfil. A nation fed from foreign markets suffers convulsion through other people's wars. And when more and more the land is occupied by large estates, by parks, by wildernesses kept for sheep or deer, while huge towns prevail, we have the type of national decay. Our statesmen look on helplessly, while a robust peasantry is supplanted by a feeble and unhealthy town-population. Our sage sanitarians want to bring water to our cities from Welsh, Scotch, or Cumberland lakes, for fear we should remember that it is as possible for the country to be occupied and cultivated by men, as to be grazed by cattle. England will not long hold up her head in Europe, if she allow the system of empty country and ever-increasing towns to prevail. There are *other* causes of the evil, I am aware, besides this zeal for flesh meat. We have to open our eyes to more things than one; and a hard battle perhaps has to be fought. But in regard to flesh-meat, each family has the remedy in its own hands. The waste of its resources is caused by an attempt to

bring back the condition of things belonging to comparative barbarism, and make us a flesh-eating nation again, when the era of flesh-eating is naturally past. And what is the consequence? I repeat a sentence which I have already uttered, *Where the population is dense, the poorer classes, if they eat flesh meat at all, are sure to get a sensible portion of their supply in an unwholesome state.* What said Dr. Letheby, inspector of the London markets, to the Social Science Association lately? "The use of unsound meat," he said, "was more injurious than that of any other unsound food. In the three city markets there are 400 tons of meat received and sold daily. With a staff of but two inspectors it was hardly possible to make a sufficient and satisfactory supervision; but nevertheless they seized from one to two tons of diseased meat every week. The seizures last year (1867) amounted to no less than 288,000lbs., or 129 tons." But he says, in the country at large the case is vastly worse. Taking all the markets in the country, it had been calculated "that only *one* part in every *five* sent to market was sound." Now, I think the last statement must be exaggerated. I cannot say that I believe it; yet how very bad the case must be, to allow of such a statement being made! If instead of *one-fifth* of the meat being unwholesome, it were every day one *fiftieth*, the case would be awful enough. For remember, that where *one* ton is condemned, there is sure to be a margin of *three* tons which is suspected, but cannot be condemned; and importers or graziers, to save themselves from great loss, are driven to disguise disease as well as they can. This suspected meat is sold at half-price, and by its cheapness attracts the poor. Hence disease is certain to arise. Smallpox has surprized us by virulent outbursts; yet what reason is there for surprize? Do not Pariahs in India, and a like class in Egypt, by eating flesh or fish in an unwholesome state bring on leprosy and smallpox and other foul contagious diseases? How do our doctors suppose that the smallpox arose for the first time? They say it came from China, and that it cannot come to us unless we catch it from a human being. Was ever anything so imbecile? The first patient did not catch it from an earlier patient, but brought it on himself by foul diet or some uncleanness; and of course, if any of us use the same foulness, he is liable to bring it on himself without anyone to transmit it to him. Paris is the city that cooks up and disguises offal; Paris can generate smallpox as well as China. Our doctors divert us from the true scent. For fear that we should discover what is our uncleanness of living, they tell us that smallpox comes because we are not vaccinated—and that also is not at all true. Indeed none are oftener vaccinated than French soldiers, and no part of the French population suffers worse from smallpox than the soldiers. Bad diet and unclean herding together must be the cause. Diet? why, if we are to believe our newspapers, for a fortnight past gentlemen have been eating in Paris the rats from the sewers, not from any real deficiency of wholesome food, but from an infatuated determination to get flesh meat. And at the same time, in the same letter, the correspondent who praises the flavour of the rat, tells us that the smallpox has broken out again during the siege; and now, says he, in the week ending November 5th the deaths from smallpox were 380; in this last week [ending November 12th] they were 419. Perhaps it is needless to say, why the animals brought to market *must* be diseased. It is not natural to an ox to get into a steamer, or into a railway car, nor to walk through the streets, nor to take his place quietly as in a pew at the market. A great deal of beating and terrifying him is needed. His fatigue in a long journey—manage it as you will—is necessarily great; he suffers

also from thirst. The cars and steamers cannot be cleanly. In short, it would be wonderful if forty-nine in fifty arrived in tolerable health. So long as there is a forced market, the cattle brought from a distance will be like the miserable Africans carried in slave ships; and all our cattle will be of a feeble constitution, liable to diseases from slight cause, because bred artificially and reared artificially. The poorer classes suffer, first and inevitably, in the squandering of their resources; secondly, a fraction of them by disease, and many more by infection from the sick. And those who evade disease do not get more strength, and do get a somewhat more inflammatory habit from the flesh meat. At the same time, by eating more expensive food they cannot afford so healthy habitations. Such are the evils on the side of health and economy.

But besides, the evils of inhumanity in the slaughter of larger cattle are very terrible. No one has yet found a remedy for the clumsiness of butchers' boys. I cannot now dwell on this acutely painful part of my subject: I will only say, it quite reconciles me to be called a Brahmin. At the same time, recurring to the inconsistency of milk and eggs with strict Vegetarianism, I will observe, that by the avowal of medical science, milk has none of the inflammatory properties of flesh meat; in so far, it is akin to Vegetarian food. But undoubtedly the pressure of dense population for milk is an evil, and tends to the adulteration of the milk, to a deterioration of it by giving to the cow whatever will increase its quantity, and to an enfeebling of cows generally, by asking too much milk of them, and by breeding them too quickly. Therefore I take pains to make no *increased* use of milk since I am a Vegetarian, nor yet of eggs. We have not yet learned to get substitutes from oleaginous nuts. We are in a state of transition. A future age will look back on this as barbarism; yet we are moving towards the higher and nobler development, in becoming even thus partial Vegetarians.

Finally, I must not omit one topic, the evils of over-feeding, which flesh-eating induces. A Vegetarian may eat too much, yet it is more difficult to him, from the bulk of his food; nearly all over-feeding is practically caused by flesh, fish, and fowl. The late witty Sydney Smith, wishing to reprove this vice, jocosely said: "As accurately as I can calculate, between the ages of ten and seventy I have eaten forty-four waggon loads of food more than was good for me." Every ounce that a man eats more than he needs, positively weakens him, for his vegetable forces use up his energy in getting rid of the needless food. The gormandizing in great towns is despicable, from one side, but from another is afflicting; when one thinks of countless disease engendered in the classes who eat too much, while there are so many who get too little. Yet to the poorer a far worse evil than the deprivation of flesh is, that they are incited to long for it when they see that all who can afford it will pay any price rather than go without it. Our working classes will not attain the elevation which is possible to them, until they put on the sentiment of Brahmins and look down upon flesh-eating as a lower state.

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