

1863.

For the Christian Messenger.

Vegetable vs. Animal Food.

[CONCLUDED.]

MR. EDITOR,—

But your correspondence M. tells us that "The teachings of the Bible are nowhere in favour of vegetarianism." That the Scriptures permit the use of flesh and wine, no one will deny, but the assertion that, their "teachings are no where in favour of vegetarianism" is at variance with facts. I beg to refer my opponent to what the Creator said to the first parents of the human species, and I can fancy his sorrow at not being privileged to advise the addition of bullocks to the bill of fare. According to the Mosaic record, God said "Behold I have given you every herb bearing seed which is upon the face of the earth, and every tree in which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for food." And again, after the transgression, God says to Adam, "in the sweat of thy brow thou shalt eat thy food till thou return unto the ground." In later scripture records, the influence seems to be, a continual contention with regard to the use of flesh; the reader will note numerous passages like the following:—"Be not among wine bibbers, among riotous eaters of flesh" and again "It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing, whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak." On the other hand there appears to be no remorse of conscience in regard to a vegetable diet.—Daniel and his three friends refused their portion of the king's meat, and of the wine which he drank, choosing instead thereof, pulse and water, yet their countenances appeared fairer than those who ate the king's meat. And God gave them knowledge and skill, in all learning and wisdom, &c. "He should have fed them also with the finest of the wheat; and with honey out of the rock should I have satisfied thee." "He maketh peace in thy borders, and filleth thee with the finest of the wheat." After the toilsome labour of gleaning in the open fields, Ruth was invited to take her seat beside the reaper of Boaz, "And he reached her parched corn; and she did eat, and was sufficed, and left." When the children of Israel murmured for bread, and again for water, God gave them with his blessing. When they murmured for flesh, we read "And while the flesh was yet between their teeth, ere it was chewed, the wrath of the Lord was kindled against the people with a very great plague."

Again M. says, that "History condemns vegetarianism. No race of people have ever willingly practiced it." Allow me to assert, that all the writers of antiquity, of every nation—historians, physicians, philosophers, and poets—assert that the first generation of men, who lived nearly a thousand years, were perfectly natural and simple in their diet. Sauchoniaton, a Phoenician historian, who flourished about four hundred years after Moses, says that "the first men lived upon the plants shooting out of the ground." Hesiod, the Greek poet, speaking of the food of the first of those tribes and nations of which he had a historical and traditional knowledge, says that, "the uncultivated fields afforded them their fruits, and supplied their bountiful and unenvied repast." Pythagoras, who travelled extensively and made himself acquainted with all the learning of his day, and in all his researches made the history and philosophy of man the principal object of his inquiries and studies, gives the same account of the dietetic habits of the primitive generations; and he taught his more favoured disciples that they ought to live in the same natural and simple manner.* Herodotus the historian, Hippocrates the father of Physic, Diodorus Siculus, all give the same testimony respecting the early generations.

Ovid, the celebrated Roman poet, who flourished in the commencement of the Christian Era, and who undoubtedly speaks from the historical and traditional authority of his day, says, in the first book of his Metamorphosis, in relation to the diet of the first generations of men, as recorded by Dryden—

"Content with food which nature freely bred, On wildings and on strawberries they fed; Cornels and bramble-berries gave the rest, And falling acorns furnished out the feast."

Josephus in speaking of the great age attained by Noah and others says "But let no one upon comparing the lives of the ancients with our lives, and with the few years we now live, think that what we have said of them is false; or make the shortness of our lives at present an argument that neither did they attain to so long life, for these ancients were beloved of God. And because their food was fitter for the prolongation of life, might well live a great number of years." And again in speaking of the Essenes a sect of the Jews, remarkable for their abstinence, says "They are long lived also, inasmuch that many of them live above a hundred years, by means of the simplicity of their diet, and the regular course of their lives." Plutarch, a man of great learning, who flourished long after the foundation of the Roman Empire had begun to crumble, under the influence of luxury and excess,—thus expresses himself on the subject of human diet: "I think it were better to accustom ourselves, from our youth to such temperance, as not to require any flesh meat at all."

When Boadicea, Queen of the Ancient Britons, was about to engage the Romans in pitched battle, in the days of Roman degeneracy, she encouraged her army with a pathetic speech, and says "The great advantage we have over them is that they cannot, like us, bear hunger, thirst, heat, or cold. They must have fine bread,

wine, and warm houses. Every herb and root satisfies our hunger, water supplies the want of wine, and every tree is to us a warm house."

Again, "The Chinese, the most treacherous, cruel and vile people in the world, eat scarcely any thing but rice." That they are treacherous and cruel is too true, but why is it attributed to their vegetable diet? Do not Historians inform us that dogs, cats, rats, worms, etc., are indiscriminately devoured by them, that three hundred millions of people consume annually eighteen million dollars worth of Opium. Add to this the account given by the Rev. Charles Gutzlaff the celebrated Missionary to China in which he states, "The Chinese may fitly be compared to ants. The land is filled with men. The houses are not inhabited, but stuffed with human beings. Multitudes issue from a few small hovels, and swarms seem to rise from the very earth. And yet his statement is not quite as disparaging as that of M., for in speaking of his travels in China, he says "Not being able to walk, we procured sedan chairs. The bearers appeared to be the lowest of the low, clad in a few rags, and looking as emaciated as if they were going to fall down dead, but under this unseemly exterior they hid great strength. I certainly believe that a well fed horse would not have been able to carry some of us who were stout and hale over the cragged mountains, without sinking under the load. Yet, though these men were meagre and hungry as wolves they were cheerful and boisterous. Does any person suppose that the Chinese subsisted on flesh exclusively, their condition would be bettered in any way, or that they would then be any less "cruel, treacherous and vile." Are there not other countries whose tribes are quite as inferior as the Chinese. Professor Lawrence, who probably ate flesh himself, and who was willing that every one else should, frankly acknowledges that "The Laplanders, Samoides, Ostiaks, Tungusos, Burats and Kamtschadales, in Northern Europe and Asia, as well as the Esquimaux in the northern and the natives of Terra del Fuego in the southern extremity of America, although they live almost entirely on flesh, are the smallest, weakest and least brave people of the globe." Still M. insists, "Observation and experiment condemn vegetarianism." Had your correspondent told us, under what circumstances the experiment was made, we probably might account for the failure. On account of space we must omit the account of scores who have given their testimony of the happy effects attending a proper vegetable diet, and confine myself to the evidence of two or three great men. "My health," says Doctor Jackson, a distinguished surgeon in the British army, "has been tried in all ways and climates; and by the aids of temperance, and hard work, I have worn out two armies in two wars, and probably could wear out another before my period of old age arrives. I eat no animal food, drink no wine nor malt liquors, nor spirits of any kind. I wear no flannel, and neither regard wind nor rain, heat, nor cold, when business is in the way."

Adam Smith whose authority stands high in the House of Commons, states in his Wealth of Nations, that the Irish chairmen, porters, and coal-heavers in London, who have been raised principally on the potatoe, and who continue to subsist on vegetable food, are perhaps the strongest men in the British dominions; and, again in the same work, says that "the most beautiful women in the British dominions are said to be the greater part of them, from the lower rank of people in Ireland, who are generally fed with the potatoe."

Brindley the celebrated English canal engineer, informs us that in the various works in which he has been engaged,—where the workmen, being paid by the piece, each exerted himself to earn as much as possible,—men from the North of Lancashire and Yorkshire, who adhered to their customary diet, of oat-cake and hasty pudding with water for their drink, sustained more labour than those who lived on bread, cheese, bacon, and beer—the general diet of the labourers of the south.

But I must not omit the experience of that great and good man, who refused the audience of even emperors and kings, when it interfered with his mission of love. Whose monument now stands in bold relief, in St. Paul's Cathedral, London, with the key of deliverance in the upraised hand; side by side with those of other great men, who rendered service to the State. John Howard the celebrated philanthropist and vegetarian, was probably more exposed to the influence of pestilential causes than any other human being that ever lived. "In the period of sixteen or seventeen years," says his biographer, "he travelled between fifty and sixty thousand miles for the sole purpose of relieving the distresses of the most wretched of the human race. The dangers, the fatigues, the privations he underwent or encountered for the good of others, were such as no others were ever exposed to, in such a cause, and such as few could have endured. He often travelled several days and nights in succession, without stopping, over roads almost impassible, in weather the most inclement, with accommodations the meanest and most wretched. Summer and winter, heat and cold, rain and snow, in all their extremes, failed alike to stay him for a moment in his course; whilst plague, pestilence and famine, instead of being evils that he shunned, were those with which he was most familiar, and to many of whose horrors he voluntarily exposed himself; visiting the foulest dungeons, filled with malignant infection, spending forty days in a filthy and infected lazaretto, plunging into military encampments where the plague was committing its most horrid ravages, and visiting where none of his conductors dare accompany him; and through all this he subsisted entirely on a most rigidly abstemious, vegetable diet, carefully avoiding the use of wine and all other alcoholic drinks. Howard's opinion therefore, on such a subject is of the highest im-

portance. The abstemious diet which, at an early period of his life, he adopted for a regard to his health" says his biographer, "he afterwards continued, and increased in its rigour from principle and from choice, as well as a conviction of the great advantages which he derived therefrom," and near the close of his life he thus writes in his diary, "I am firmly persuaded, as to the health of our bodies, that herbs and fruits will sustain nature in every respect far beyond the best flesh."

We have now a repetition of assertions which I consider have been fully answered above. As regards vegetarianism being a failure in public Institutions, it may be true: Is any one prepared to say what kind of vegetable diet was substituted for that of flesh? It does not follow that stimulants and condiments are good for man, because they belong to the Vegetable kingdom.—Dr. Cheyne, a Scotch Physician, in his writings says "For those who are extremely broken down with chronic diseases, I have found no other relief than a total abstinence from all animal food, and from all sorts of strong and fermented liquors. In thirty years practice, in which I have in some degree or other advised this method, I have had but two cases, in whose total recovery I have been mistaken; and these were too far gone before I undertook them."

Dr. Halloran, Physician of the Lunatic Asylum of Cork, states that there are certain festive seasons of the year when the Asylum is supplied with flesh meat. The consequence of these occasions have been uniformly the same.—The strictest precautions were necessary to guard against a scene of uproar, which was sure to follow. The same was the case when the establishment was new and flesh-meat furnished once a week.

"Vegetarianism would make our food dearer,—not cheaper." It follows that the inhabitants of those countries the most densely populated, must necessarily subsist mostly on vegetable diet, from the fact that vegetable food is always easier obtained and cheaper in comparison with animal food, whereas, on the other hand, the inhabitants of those countries that draw their sustenance from the sea, or depend on animal food for their support never have, and probably never will become very numerous on account of the difficulty in getting, and the high price of flesh-meat. I learn that the quantity of vegetables necessary to feed a sufficient number of animals to sustain five men, for five years, would amply keep eighty men for the same period. Were we to remove flesh and grease from our tables, and could we reconcile ourselves until the stimulating effects had worn away the extra addition of the vegetable part would be inconsiderable. The amount of food, required to sustain an individual who subsists exclusively on flesh, is almost incredible. The Russian and Greek labourers, and those of many other countries, will work from twelve to sixteen hours a day with great power, activity, and cheerfulness, and subsist on about one pound of coarse bread and a little fruit containing but little nourishment; while, according to the account of the Rev. Mr. Armes, a Patagonian will consume from fifteen to twenty pounds of flesh in a day: "Indeed" says he, "They will often, in their indolence, suffer their provisions to run very low, and for two or three days, subsist on very little; and then when urged by hunger, they will mount their horses and go out in pursuit of fresh supplies. And when they return with their game, it is a very common thing for a single Patagonian to consume from fifteen to twenty pounds of flesh in a day. Indeed, I have frequently seen a single man, after two or three days severe abstinence, consume at one meal, in the course of three hours, the half of a guanaco, which would weigh from fifteen to twenty pounds. If my memory serve me, Sir John Ross makes a similar statement, respecting the flesh required by the Esquimaux. On the other hand, again, Writers inform us that millions of the inhabitants of India and China, subsist on a few ounces of rice a day for each individual; and where they are in other respects temperate and correct in their habits, they are well nourished, athletic and active."

"More grain and vegetables can be raised on a farm with flocks and herds than without them." It is opinion, though generally entertained, may admit of a doubt. It occurs to me, that instead of a gain in converting the grass or hay into manure through the medium of the ox, the increase would be greater, by composting directly from the ground, thus saving the waste in sustaining the life of the animal. I refer here to grounds which are not tillable. Many farmers have more arable land than they can cultivate to advantage; instead therefore, of toiling in the Autumn to procure the hay, and the labour of feeding it out through the long Winter, if they would enclose their useless fields, in order to keep all animals outside, and allow each succeeding grass crop to die on the spot, their fields would each succeeding year grow richer independent of their own labour, and probably every fourth or fifth year, if the ground were in tolerable condition at the first, would bear cultivation and produce a good crop of grain. I have seen a patch of gravel from the bottom of a cellar, with no other manure than the dust which blew from the street and its own vegetation, in a few years, yield a rich profusion of shrubbery and a heavy crop of grass. If this mode of farming were partially adopted, the potatoe, probably, would be less likely to decay, and the vegetables produced from the virgin soil would be more healthy for man than those from the depraved soil, under the present system. The writer, in closing his remarks, thunders out the alarming prediction—that if a vegetable diet were universally adopted famine would be the inevitable result. How alarming! Suppose that M., like Joseph, should prophecy another seven years of plenty, and seven years of famine, would he, or any other sensible man, think of feeding the wheat,

the barley, the oats, the peas, etc., during the years of plenty to "the flocks, and the herds," in order to make food for us during the seven years of famine? I answer no. I think he would, like Joseph, gather the corn and store it for the time of need.

This communication, being made chiefly of extracts, may be interesting to some; but I fear it will not meet the object I had in view, namely, to benefit the poor. Had my opponent, instead of making so many assertions, selected two or three of the very best, strongest, and most unanswerable, it would have saved space and time, and allowed me with my eight years experience, to have made some practicable remarks, but I shall only again add "Our wants are many our needs are few."

R.

February 10th.

For the Christian Messenger.

Prince Edward Island.

QUARTERLY MEETINGS, &c.

Dear Brother,—

We still maintain our Quarterly Meetings on the Island. One was held with the North River Church at the end of last September. The weather and the roads were forbidding. But ministering brethren came, Shaw, McLeod, Dobson, with myself; the people got together well, and we had an interesting, and it was hoped, not an unprofitable season. We have recently held another of these meetings, at the close of last month. This time at Dog River. Ministers present, brethren Shaw, McLeod, Ross, with myself. The weather fine, and good attendances and services.

The brethren about Dog River and Long Creek, both in the same neighbourhood, have heretofore held a nominal church relationship to the North River brethren. As, however, they have acted independently of the latter for some time past, it has been thought desirable that they should organize as a separate church. This they have now done. On Monday, the 27th ult., when our last Quarterly Meeting was over, a service was held for that purpose at the Long Creek meeting-house. Ministering brethren present as last named. Some thirty were formed into the new body, and others are expected to unite with them. Brother M. Ross, who has laboured among them for some time past, was called to the pastorate. A pleasing addition was lately made to their numbers. The good Lord prosper them yet more abundantly!

We propose to hold another Quarterly Meeting before the snow leaves us again. TRYON is to be the place for the meeting; and it is to begin on Friday evening, the 14th prox. (March.) The time is so near, that it will not be easy to forget it. Our appointments for these meetings are made at irregular intervals. But this is unavoidable under our circumstances; and it seems better to hold them irregularly than not at all.

I have just returned from a missionary excursion to Grand River. Last summer a few residing on the river were baptized into the faith of Jesus. There has long been a little Baptist Church in that neighbourhood; but of late it had almost disappeared. Brethren Shaw and McLeod have been with me in my late visit.—We have gathered together the scattered flock, and helped them to get things into order. There is thus some appearance of a spiritual resurrection among our Grand River friends, and we are hoping to see signs of renewed efficiency among them hereafter. We Baptists are few and feeble in this Island; but, like Paul, we "can do ALL things, through Christ, who strengtheneth us."

I want to tell you a story, with a moral, about a late effort of ours for Foreign Missionary purposes in the city.* But all is not done at which we aim in these matters. Whereupon for the present I postpone story and moral both.

Your fellow-labourer,

J. DAVIS.

Charlottetown, Feb. 20, 1862.

* [We had part of the story last week; send on the remainder and the moral.—Ed. C. M.]

For the Christian Messenger.

Gymnasium at Wolfville.

MR. EDITOR,—

It is encouraging to see another step taken in the right direction. While the various methods, suggested or employed, for the effectual cultivation of the mental faculties have received a fair share of that attentive consideration which they so richly merit, the development of the physical powers, upon the health and vigor of which depends so largely the success of the efforts of those higher and nobler powers, in whatever course directed, cannot be unworthy of notice. And

* "The Pythagorians," says Hufeland, "who lived on a simple vegetable diet, afforded the most numerous instances of old age."