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The Confessions of a Vegetarian.

(By the Rev. Charles M. Sheldon, in the 'Independent'.)

I became a vegetarian before reading 'The Jungle' and the Packing Committee report. Hence I am not to be classed with those who have been scared into a good habit. I have acquired mine after a deliberate, purposeful and cheerful study of my own dietary needs and practical experimentation which has amounted to a demonstration satisfactory to myself as to what is good for me to eat, no matter what may be good for some one else.

It may be stated as a general fact that most people eat too much. In the year 2006, when the sloop will be a thing of the past and drunkenness from drink no longer known, societies will arise to arouse a nation drunk with the intemperance of too much food. The ordinary bill of fare in a hotel is a monstrosity. It is, however, no less so in nearly every farmhouse. I recall with a feeling of shame the immense amount of work it put upon my mother and sisters, the bill of fare we men demanded on our farm for breakfast. We thought we must have, and did have beefsteak and potatoes, eggs, hot biscuit, coffee, griddle cakes, molasses, apple sauce and very often some kind of pie. Dinner was, in the language of the card table, several better than this, and supper was a resounding echo of breakfast. We had meat three times a day, and thought we could not live without it. It is a marvel to me now that we have any of us lived so long with it.

Six years ago I tried the experiment of going an entire year without any breakfast. I drank two coffee cups of hot water, and on the strength of that bill of fare I did a healthy man's regular forenoon's work. At the time I preached or lectured, on an average, once a day for six months, and did not miss a single engagement or have a headache or a pain. And I date from that experiment the experience which has led to these confessions.

Now the close of that breakfastless year I had the good fortune to meet a Scotch family in Dundee. They were all vegetarians—father, mother, grandmother and seven children. None of the children had ever tasted either meat or fish. A healthier or happier family I have never seen. The good housewife did confess that there was certain seasons of the year when it was difficult to provide a varied and interesting bill of fare without meat, but there was no lack on the table during any of the meals I was privileged to take with them, and the dishes were without exception palatable and nourishing.

I may be said to date from that visit in Dundee my own conversion to a meatless diet. Since that time I have eaten meat more or less, but increasingly less, until at last I have entirely ceased to eat meat, and do not see why I shall ever again pay my toll to the Beef Barons. It would not concern me in the least, indeed, if all flesh of beasts and birds should perish off the face of the earth except cows and hens. Milk and eggs are a part of the daily fare. Potatoes, beans, peas, all green and succulent herbs, radishes, lettuce, beets, corn, celery and unions. The vegetarian (i. e., the one whose definition of the word is the same as mine) also adds to his bill of fare two other worlds of supply, namely, fruits and nuts. All fruits, so far as I have tried them, are healthful, especially apples and oranges. The most ideal way of getting fruits upon the vegetarian's table is for him to go out into his garden and pick them off the trees or vines. When that cannot be done one must fall back on or into the cold storage plant. But judicious marketing can be resorted to at different seasons of the year with success. Nuts are not understood by one person in a thousand. They (that is, the nuts) contain vast nutriment packed away in a little compass. The idea of putting nuts and raisins in the 'dessert' on the hotel bill of fare is to make the vegetarian smile. Nuts should be eaten as a part of the main bill of fare, not the finishing touch. There is great nourishment in peanuts, walnuts, pecans, butternuts, almonds and Brazil nuts. They are distinct in flavor and in properties, and eaten with liberal sprinkling of salt are harmless to the most delicate digestion.

There was a man once who, when the dew was on his strawberry vines, and the wren that had her nest in the box elder near his bedroom window had begun her morning thanks, arose and dressed him leisurely and strode out into his little garden at the back of his lot and without losing any of the wren's melody plucked him a bunch of radishes, cut a liberal supply of heads of tender lettuce, picked a pan of strawberries and while in the

garden took out of the soil several handfuls of young beets with their tops and also picked a dish of green peas. Going back to the house he picked over and washed the vegetables and berries, laying the peas and beets aside to be cooked for dinner. The radish, lettuce, berries, together with a pitcher of milk and a plate of crackers or bread go on the table. Breakfast is ready. There has been no banging of stove lids. No frantic stirring of the hot fire on a hot summer morning. No greasy odor of bacon or beefsteak pervading the house. No toilsome and lengthy preparation on the part of a flushed faced 'hired girl' to get ready coffee, steak and hot biscuit for reluctant stomachs of people who are going to leave half the breakfast on their plates to be wasted or served up again in hash. The time this man uses to get his breakfast ready is the time spent by the wren in her morning devotions, but it is enough. I could tell the name of this man and of this wren, but these confessions are already too personal.

Not only do civilized people eat too much, but they spend twice the time necessary in getting food ready to eat. I do not see why my wife should be expected to spend more than half her lifetime planning meals and getting them on the table, or why another woman called the 'help' should spend three-fourths of her time in washing a multitude of dirty dishes and putting them back on the table to be dirtied again. The vegetable habit simplifies life. It helps us to do other things besides get our meals. Ten minutes is time enough to get breakfast. Then we have leisure to eat slowly the little we have. The general American plan is to spend half an hour getting twice as much food on the table as the family needs and then omit family prayers and hurry through breakfast in fifteen minutes.

If this article is printed I foresee trouble for myself. People are going to write to ask what the vegetarian does when he is invited out; when he is one of the victims at a banquet; when apples are two for a quarter in New York; when the frost has taken the peaches in Delaware and the potato bugs has eaten all the visible supply in Nebraska. These things do not trouble me. Most of my friends have enough on their tables besides meat to keep me from starving until I get home. If apples fail I fall back on prunes. At most banquets there are radishes, celery and olives. If potatoes are high, I can thrive on rice.

Meanwhile I have the satisfaction of unusually good health and the consciousness every day that, so far as I am concerned, no man need work in an abattoir, and the double satisfaction of the consciousness every day that, so far as I am concerned again, the Beef Trust can get nothing out of me.

She Did.

Admiral Capps, in an address to a temperance society, told how drink had once caused the downfall of a brave soldier.

In the course of the sad story he said: 'Sometimes after a debauch, the man would be repentant, humble. He would promise his wife to do better. But, alas! the years taught her the barrenness of all such promises.'

'And one night, when he was getting to be an old man, a prematurely old man thin limbed, stooped-shouldered, with red-rimmed eyes, he said to his wife sadly:—

'You're a clever woman, Jenny, a courageous, active, good woman. You should have married a better man than I am, dear.'

'She looked at him, and, thinking of what he once had been, she answered in a quiet voice:—

"I did James."

Membership and Orthodoxy.

An Argyleshire elder was asked how the kirk got along. He said:

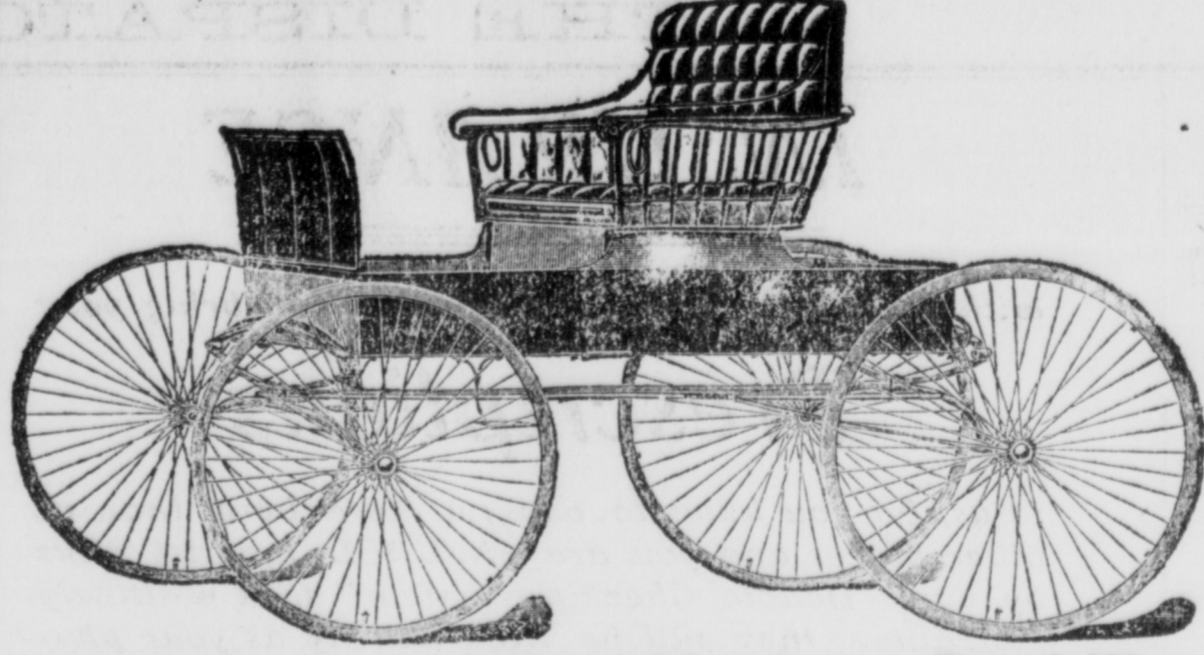
'Aweel, we had 400 members. Then we had a division, and there were only 200 left; then a disruption, and only 10 of us left. Then we had a heresy trial; and now there is only me and my brother Duncan left, and I ha' great doots o' Duncan's orthodoxy.'—*Christian Register.*



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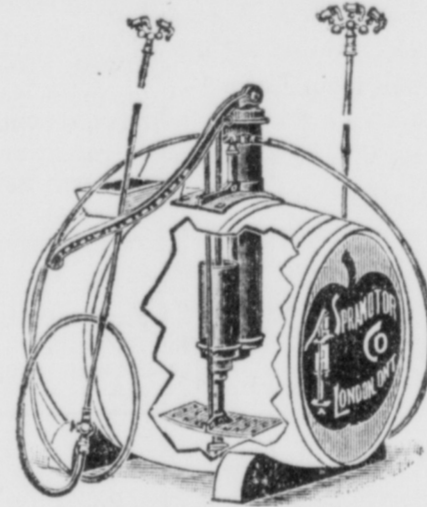


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- Saves from bitter reflections.
- Crowns the evening of life with peace.
- Lights up the dying hour with joy.
- Robb death of its sting, and the grave of its victory.—Zion's Watchman.

Not His Denomination.

'Now, look here, sir,' exclaimed the gamekeeper imperatively, 'didn't you see the notice at the end of this road, "Pedestrians not allowed?"'

'I did observe a notice stating that pedestrians were not allowed here,' replied the mild-mannered gentleman, readily, 'but you see I'm a Congregationist.'

'Oh, indeed,' returned the gamekeeper, slightly puzzled; 'then I suppose it's all right sir. You can walk on.'—'Tit-Bits.'

Overheard at Commencement.

It was commencement day at M— Seminary. The mother of the prettiest girl graduate was there—overflowing with pride at her daughter's success. 'I'll tell you these girls have to walk chalk,' said the complacent mother. 'They can't go anywhere without a "shampooer."' A little later, turning to her companion, the good lady said: 'Can you tell me what State "Table-d'hote" is in? My oldest daughter is in the South somewhere, for her health. She wrote me that she was better, and was going to the Table-d'hote for the first time. Now I've looked all over the map of the United States and I can't find that name anywhere.'—July Lipincott's.

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