

English shops, the Club, and the Churches. The Church of England is in a lovely, large, shady garden, beautiful with flowers, and the Church parades are a joy to see. The Mackean gardens are a cool quiet retreat when the sun shines over warm. Large shady trees cover the green lawns, which are dotted with benches and chairs. Masses of flowers, purple, white, pink, red, and varied hues, are banked in the centre. A gentle cool wind springs up as you sit feasting your eyes on the beauty around, not the least of which are the rosy-cheeked English babies out for an airing.

L. E. M.

"FACTS VERSUS FALLACIES OF VEGETARIANISM."
A REPLY BY A VEGETARIAN.

THE Editor has courteously invited us to reply to Captain R. M. Carter's article entitled "Facts versus Fallacies of Vegetarianism" in the March number of this Journal, an opportunity of which we gladly avail ourselves.

If we take Captain Carter's meaning correctly, he maintains that the dangers of a flesh diet from putrefaction, germs, parasites, etc., lurking in flesh meats are paralleled by the dangers of vegetable foods, due to these latter foods being washed in water "containing the ova of the lung and liver fluke," the "germs of cholera, typhoid or bacillary dysentery," and so on. We fail to see the logic of the argument. If infected water is going to be employed for washing food substances at all, would it not be utilized for washing all foods alike, both flesh and vegetable? Moreover, flesh eaters find it necessary to eat vegetables as well as flesh, and do not they wash their vegetables before eating them as much as vegetarians do? We cannot therefore see why the use of vegetable foods alone should make disease-infected water more dangerous than the use of flesh food combined with vegetables would do. The argument of vegetarianism, referred to by Captain Carter, is that flesh foods have been proved to contain, in themselves, the germs of various diseases, such as those of tuberculosis for example, and thus present dangers which, so far as we are aware, have not been proved to exist in anything approaching the same degree in vegetable food-stuffs. The force of the vegetarian position, as far as tuberculosis is concerned, may be seen by the following quotation from Dr. Jackson, President of the British Medical Association, 1889. "I may remind you of the examination of the Queen's herd of cattle, where out of 40 animals, 36 (or 90%) were found to have been affected. It is probable that tuberculosis

is scarcely likely to be less prevalent in herds less constantly under supervision." Further, the Society of Medical Officers of Health at Manchester in 1892 resolved that "the flesh of any animal affected with tuberculosis, *to however slight an extent*, is unfit to be sold as human food." Readers may draw their own conclusions.

Captain Carter next makes the assertion that vegetarian food-stuffs are open to the same objections as flesh is, on the score of containing that class of substances known under various names, one of which is purins, and he instances coffee, tea and cocoa as common food accessories to a vegetarian diet." We venture to submit that such an assertion is grossly misleading, and logically unsound as an argument against vegetarianism. For the three stimulant beverages mentioned, tea, coffee and cocoa, are quite as much, if not more so, accessories to the flesh-eater's regime as they are to the vegetarian's dietary. It is a notorious fact that large meat-eaters are very frequently also large consumers of tea; as an example of this the Australian may be instanced; it is further well known that a great number of vegetarian food-reformers vehemently denounce the use of these substances, knowing how injurious their constant use is likely to prove, owing to the drugs which they contain. To compare these substances, which are mere stimulants and contain practically no food value whatsoever, with flesh meats, is, we repeat, unfair and illogical. If it is granted that the whole class of purin bodies is objectionable, as apparently Captain Carter admits, then the vegetarian has before him an abundant supply of materials which are free from purin bodies, while the consumer of flesh is faced by the fact that every form of flesh, fish or fowl contains the objectionable purins in varying quantities. A few vegetable substances contain purins notably all forms of peas and beans, onions and asparagus, but anyone who possesses any practical knowledge of fleshless or vegetarian dietetics knows that there is no difficulty whatever in providing an abundant, varied, nutritious and correctly proportioned dietary out of the hosts of other materials which are free from purins. Further on, Captain Carter remarks that it is "quite easy for the expert to arrange for a purin free dietary for a community;" for the vegetarian expert, yes: but where is the expert advocate of flesh-eating who can provide a purin free dietary containing flesh?

Limits of space forbid us to deal with more than one or two further points. If we interpret Captain Carter's meaning accurately, we understand him to imply that the mixed dietary at present in general use in most so-called civilized countries has

been arrived at and found to be the best as the result of careful experiment and dietetic research. We believe that this view is entirely fallacious and unsupported by evidence. The dietary of the average "civilized" person to-day has been arrived at almost entirely hap-hazard and by chance. There has been scarcely any reasoning about it at all, much less chemical or physiological research. Men have eaten flesh meat because they liked it, because it was less trouble for them to graze and kill a cow than to till a field, because as they became richer they could afford to buy flesh more than they could formerly, *not* because they became convinced that the proteids of flesh were superior to those of the plant world, or for any other physiological or chemical reason. Few people to-day realize the fact that the present meat-eating habit in European countries, on a large scale, is of comparatively recent growth. We may be permitted to quote from our book "*Food and Health*," page 83.

"Although we read of the wealthy classes of the middle ages, the barons and their retainers, consuming large quantities of flesh-meat, we also read that the diet of the great bulk of the nation, the peasantry, was almost wholly innocent of flesh, and consisted of such foods as oatmeal, brown bread, and the like. MacCulloch says that "so late as 1763 the slaughter of bullocks for the public markets was wholly unknown, even in Glasgow, though the city had then a population of nearly 30,000." Dr. Keith says that "in the twenties and thirties, the food of the working man, and also of most of the upper classes, consisted mostly of milk, eggs, fish, oatmeal, potatoes, and a few other vegetables. There was no baker or butcher in the parish." The case was much the same with the Romans, whose soldiers marched, fought, and won their empire chiefly on corn; meat-eating and habits of luxurious living became prevalent only in the latter days of Rome, and the decline and decay of the Empire accompanied the introduction of these habits." Honest and genuine study of the comparative values of correctly designed flesh and fleshless dietaries is, in modern times, of quite recent date. From their own personal experiences, from the successes of vegetarians in athletic contests, despite the very small number of vegetarians from whom to select suitable competitors, especially from the sweeping victories of vegetarians over flesh consumers in the famous German walking races, and also from the recent extraordinarily interesting researches of Fisher and Chittenden in America, vegetarians may look forward with the greatest confidence to further honest investigation of the claims of a dietary free from fleshfoods, sure in the belief that, once the true

methods of science are applied to this problem, the cause which they have so much at heart will be fully vindicated and justified and found to contain within it the germs of great benefit to the human race, and of relief to the animal world from the vast mountain of torture and suffering which now afflicts it.

The suggestion that vegetarianism would disapprove of infants being fed on their mothers' milk, because the latter is of "animal" origin, is, we believe, entirely unwarranted. We have never before come across this theory, which appears to us utterly absurd and unreasonable. It is not against animal food, because it is animal, that vegetarians as a rule object, but against such food when the latter can be obtained only by the infliction of cruelty upon the animal world.

In the argument derived from the dietary of modern polar explorers, we recognise an old friend reincarnated who we thought had been safely laid to rest long ago. Merely as a matter of ordinary logic, even if it were proved, *by actual experiments, properly carried out by competent observers*, that flesh food was essential or superior to vegetarian food in Arctic regions, would this be any reason why the rest of the world should live on a similar dietary? Because Exquimaux and polar explorers have managed to keep in health under exceedingly severe climatic and other conditions, are we, in totally different conditions, to follow their example and dine as they do, in the belief that the diet they happen to have adopted is the best possible diet?

One more point before concluding. We observe that Capt. Carter examines scarcely any of the arguments for vegetarianism other than the purely medical or physiological arguments. We venture to submit, with all the insistence of which we are capable, that the question of the use or non-use of the flesh of sentient creatures for human food is not a question for physiologists or pathologists to decide *alone*. Recognising the importance, not absolute but proportionate, of physiology and pathology in determining the point at issue, we give the heartiest and most cordial welcome to all genuine research along these lines; but we still maintain that habits of eating possess other aspects of equally great, if not greater, significance. The humanities are as important to man as chemical formulæ or the nutritive value of proteids; probably, if we possessed a true vision of the life and evolution of man as a whole, they would be seen to be of vastly more importance. It is for this reason, necessarily somewhat crudely formulated above in the few lines at our disposal, that we plead for a straightforward study, and for straightforward thinking and philo-

sophizing on the problem of human feeding, in all its aspects—chemical, physiological, pathological, social, economic, philosophical, humanitarian, religious. If this is done, then we believe that the conclusion which most people capable of logical thought and human feeling will arrive at is, in the words of Virchow, that “the future is with the vegetarians.”

A. E. POWELL.

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'TABLOID' BISMUTH GAUZE.

The use as a surgical dressing of gauze impregnated with bismuth salts in place of iodoform is a practice with much to commend it, both from the practitioner's and from the patient's point of view. Such a dressing was introduced some time ago by Messrs. Burroughs Wellcome & Co., as one of the well-known 'Tabloid' series of dressings, and has met with considerable success. As compared with the older iodoform gauze it has the advantages of being quite odourless and nontoxic, while in antiseptic power it is in no way inferior. When used for packing cavities 'Tabloid' Bismuth Gauze remains fresh and free from offensive odour for much longer periods than unmedicated gauze or iodoform gauze.

'Tabloid' Bismuth Gauze is issued in various sizes and packings, the latest of these being that now under notice. It consists of a carton containing six yards of gauze, half-an-inch wide and with selvedge edges. The gauze is sterilised and each carton is enclosed in a special covering which keeps it sterile. This size of 'Tabloid' Bismuth Gauze will be of particular value in ear, throat and nose work.