The Vegetarian Magazine May 1905

The Vegetarian Magazine

W.E. Elfrink

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The Vegetarian Magazine

Ninth Year • Chicago, Ill. • May 1905 • No. 7

What is Food?

Dr. W. E. Blinnick.

"Man does not live by bread alone," is an old saying with a good deal of truth hidden away in it. But people have continued to read over the surface and failed to see that we are being told that nourishment is not altogether a matter of solid materials.

Scientists have estimated with elaborate care that a man requires certain quantities of various elements in order to keep his body nourished. Oxygen, hydrogen, nitrogen, phosphorus, sulphur and carbon, together with some eight or ten mineral elements, are mentioned as necessary in order to keep the body well nourished. They tell us that if we get these elements in the right quantities and proportions the body will maintain itself.

It is found, however, that when we try to take these substances from the mineral world we do not nourish us. Carbon, for example, is a very important food substance, but the body has no use for charcoal. Phosphorus in its crude state is a violent poison. Sulphur is insoluble in any of the body juices and no soluble substance can be used by the body. None of these various so-called "proximate principles" are food so long as they are in the mineral world. It is only when they enter the complex vegetable molecule that they become food.

Why is it that we find such a difference? Is not carbon always carbon, nitrogen always nitrogen and hydrogen always hydrogen? Yes, but the question is what happens to matter in the passage from the mineral to the vegetable world. If matter of itself were food then we could take it from any source and be nourished by it, but since we have to get it in certain forms, we are driven to ask whether or not there may not be another something added to matter in the process of growth which is the real food. We can not say that these elements are food for a man would starve to death on a diet composed of them. We are, then, compelled to conclude that matter of itself is not food and to surmise that it may be a conveyer of food.

Chemists can take apart a kernel of wheat and tell us what it is composed of, but they can not put it together again. If the analysis were complete they should be able to build again what they have torn down. Something has escaped them and only the natural process of growth can supply it.

Test tubes and reagents may tell part of the truth, but not all of the truth. Chemistry is death. When a chemist analyzes anything the life of the substance leaves it. If it is a vegetable substance he lowers it to the mineral world. He can not analyze the life principle because it won't stay in the tube. Even our bodily death is largely a chemical process, but the change eludes the methods of the laboratory.

Life is the essential thing in food. We may call it life, true, or sunshine, it matters not, so long as we recognize the principle.
 ance to the deadly germ, use beef tea? Do we wish to feed the enemy and prolong illness? But what can be used in place of it? Port wine and milk, says one good caller. Potato soup, says another, and a third suggests eggs beaten in milk. So many kindly suggestions—let us see. Wine is simply a stimulant, does not build—put it aside. Milk stands equal with beef tea in growing the deadly germ. Potatoes are a carbonaceous food and we need a balanced diet for the invalid. Eggs, yes, in moderation. Oatmeal gruel cooked at least four hours, strained and thinned to a consistency, salted slightly, will take the place of beef tea or milk, and we will not be feeding the enemy. Not a big bowl full of gruel at a time, but a cup full nicely served and sipped slowly. And when it is desirable the gruel can be made a triple heavier and two or three stewed prunes, or a stewed fig, or a few raisins beaten in, and eaten with a spoon. Figs and prunes are laxative. Or the mush can be of consistency to serve in a sauce with a very soft poached egg on top. And when one gets to this stage of eating the egg can be placed on soft boiled rice or flake hominy—remembering that the hominy is laxative, the rice opposite, for our invalid must get well on food, fresh air and sunshine—not drugs.

And there are soups and stews innumerable, all appetizing, nourishing, healthful. Split pea, simple and plain, wash and soak in soft unsalted water, and boil in the water in which the peas were soaked. Use plenty of water and for the very weak invalid, serve the broth only, just salting to taste; but a portion of the peas passed through a sieve will make the soup rich and fine. Split peas are rich in nitrogen and care must be taken in serving them. Lentils are also rich and give a decided change in taste. Lima beans can be used sparingly if they are free from their skins, carefully cooked and as carefully served.

We must not forget the nerve food contained in an onion or celery. Chop an onion fine and cook soft in plenty of water, slightly salted. When done pass through a sieve, thicken with an egg, salt to taste and serve immediately. Celery can be blended with the onion or cooked alone. Asparagus or cauliflower water, thickened with an egg and salted to taste will be acceptable for a change. Asparagus or cauliflower on toast, dressed with a soft egg will also be appetizing and the vegetables can be made to cover the egg taste.

We must give as much change as possible, all the variety that the season and condition permits. A monotonous diet will soon tire even a well person, and this is certainly a thing to be avoided in the case of a convalescent. Good whole wheat, or brown bread, thoroughly baked, or zwieback, are always permissible when desired. Dairy butter, or salat oil, or perhaps a very little peanut butter—but peanut butter contains meat as well as butter value, and is generally too heavy a food for one who is convalescing. As for fruits, try baked apples and fresh pears if they can be procured. Remember that dates, figs, prunes, nectarines and pears are laxatives. Blackberries, dewberries and raspberries are sharply opposite—but the seeds should be removed. Peaches can also be classed with the berries, and a person who requires laxatives should never eat peaches in any way except fresh and ripe from the tree. The deadly germ

(Continued on next page.)
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water till it becomes transparent. Have a baking dish two-thirds full of apples, pared, cored and quartered. Sprinkle in a handful of seeded raisins and pour over the sugar. Cover the dish and bake in a moderate oven for at least three-quarters of an hour. Serve with a plain honey dressing, or some simple sweetened gravy.

INDIAN GROAT.

Put two tablespoonsfuls of yellow, granulated corn meal into a pint of cold water, stir it around for a moment, and then carefully drain away all the water. Add to the meal a pint of boiling water. Set in the double boiler and cook for four hours. When done, salt to taste and thin with hot water if desired. Some like a little butter and strained honey whipped in when it is served.

ARROWROOT GROAT.

Put a pinch of salt with two tablespoonfuls of arrowroot and work to a smooth paste with a little water; then add one pint of boiling water and stir while boiling. Cook till quite clear. Sweeten with honey and flavor with nutmeg or lemon.

ARROWROOT WITH EGG.

Separate one egg. Beat the white and yolks until very light, then mix them carefully and add slowly one pint of hot plain arrowroot gruel. Serve with strips of toasted whole wheat bread.

JESSIE S. PETITT-FLINT.

Famous Actress Criticizes President’s Killing.

“I think it a most regrettable circumstance,” declared Mrs. Fiske in an interview with a Chicago American representative, “that a man of the prominence of the President, whom millions of American boys look upon as an example of all that is admirable and worthy of emulation, can find no more elevating method of spending his vacation than by going away off into the wilds and killing something. It undoes an immense amount of the work of those forces in our society that are always working for the repression of the natural brutal instincts of man. It can have no effect save a bad one. I see you do not agree with me,” added Mrs. Fiske, seeing that I was not applauding and shaking “Hear, hear!”

“In every particular,” I declared. “But after having established a reputation as a strenuous citizen and one who can ride hard, shoot straight and strike from the shoulder, Mr. Roosevelt evidently thinks it incumbent upon him to live up to it.”

“Oh, but there are so many strenuous and many things one could do instead of hunting animals!” declared the actress and then the cartoonist and I witnessed a little private exhibition of Mrs. Fiske’s art. She grew enthusiastic and indignant by turns and her jeweled hands flashed rapidly as she talked.

“Is it particularly brave,” she demanded, “for a company of mounted men to turn loose a pack of forty or fifty dogs on a bear, run it down until it is exhausted, and cornered by the dogs, and then shoot it as it stands at bay, fighting for its life?”

“Is that an ennobling spectacle to set before the youth of the country as the favorite diversion of its President? Where is the valor, where is the courage, displayed in this wanton shuddering of the blood of a helpless dumb animal?”

As she paused for a reply I was forced to murmur that no Carnegie medals would ever be awarded to bear hunters.

“How much better is the method of Ernest Thompson-Seton,” continued Mrs. Fiske, “who goes forth with a camera in stead of a rifle; who gains all the advantages of life in the open; who has the curious and interesting experiences of the hunter in studying the lives and habits of the animals and tracking them down, but who wants only a photograph instead of a skin to decorate his den!”

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