

ment might be disastrous. Abel's position is far beneath hers, yet——"

"Yet," exclaimed the old man, in an excited manner, "I would almost as soon see my son in his grave as married to *her!* Position! Why, do you think my son is a day labourer, sir? My word!—Abel is far beyond Aggington's girl! Position, indeed! Why—but never mind—Abel shall never marry Mildred Aggington if I can prevent it! Say no more. She should rather die!"

"My dear sir——" I began.

But he waved me away, and it was in considerable surprise that I sought my bedroom, puzzling my brain concerning his meaning, and wondering how Abel would receive the news in the morning that no message had come from the Hall for him. Miss Aggington had not condescended to ask about the man who had saved her life at the risk of his own. Then old Strong's prejudice: what did that mean? The game had opened with vigour indeed, and my curiosity was excited, not without reason, as it proved.

END OF CHAPTER THE SECOND.

A FLORENTINE MAY-DAY.

MAY-DAY in Florence in the olden time:
A festal day of pomp and pageantry,
Of coronals and banners fair to see,
Of peal of deep-toned bells, and silver chime—
A day of all things tuned to one sweet rhyme:
"Love! Love!"

Out to the city gate there flocks to-day
Full many a maiden garlanded with flowers,
Speeding to meet, amid the festooned bowers,

The city's bravest youths, in rich array:
For this the song the silver trumpets play—
"Love! Love!"

And there the noblest youth steps forth to greet
Her, the most loved, the fairest maid of all,
With Beauty's prize—a lily pure and tall;
And, as the people shout, fond glances meet,
And all the sounds proclaim this message sweet—
"Love! Love!"

GEORGE WEATHERLY.

WHAT IS VEGETARIANISM?*

BY A VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE VEGETARIAN SOCIETY.



THE practice of vegetarianism has of late made much progress in London, Manchester, and other English towns; and the vegetarian system of diet which, ten years ago, was commonly regarded as a mere "fad" or crotchet, is now treated respectfully, or even admiringly, by such eminent scientists as Sir Henry Thompson and Dr. B. W. Richardson. It may not be amiss, therefore, to give a short account of the present state of the vegetarian movement; the objects at which it aims; and the chief arguments which are advanced by vegetarian writers and speakers in advocating their cause.

There are two societies in existence which aim at substituting the use of fruits, cereals, and other vegetable products for the flesh of animals, one of these institutions being presided over by Professor J. E. B. Mayor, of St. John's, Cambridge, the well-known classical scholar. This is the original Vegetarian

Society, founded in 1847, which has its headquarters in Manchester, and consists of members, associates, and subscribers, with a monthly organ entitled the *Vegetarian Messenger*. Secondly, there is the London Vegetarian Society, a recent offshoot of the former, established on a somewhat similar basis, and carrying on a vigorous propaganda in the London district and the South of England. The *Vegetarian* is a weekly journal, published at the office of the London Vegetarian Society; while almost the same principles are preached in the *Herald of Health* and one or two minor periodicals.

An active crusade is thus kept up by means of public meetings, lectures, discussions, vegetarian dinners, and the circulation of vegetarian literature; and the result is already seen in the increased attention which the question of food-reform is receiving at the hands of the general public and those who are specially interested in hygienic and social problems. The vegetarian restaurants, of which there are now twenty-nine in London, seven in Manchester, and one or more in Liverpool, Leeds, Birmingham, Bristol, Nottingham, Newcastle, Portsmouth, and other large towns, have done a great deal towards making vegetarianism popular.

* The author alone is responsible for the views expressed in this paper.

It should be clearly understood that "vegetarianism" does not mean a diet of garden vegetables, as the title is sometimes wrongly taken to imply; the common idea that a vegetarian is one who lives on cabbages and potatoes being altogether erroneous and misleading. The staple articles of the vegetarian diet are the cereals (especially in the form of wheat-meal bread and oatmeal porridge), the legumes (such as peas, beans, haricots, and lentils), and last, but not least, the various kinds of fruit. Most vegetarians also admit the use, in moderation, of such animal products as milk, butter, cheese, and eggs; since these can be obtained without that sacrifice of animal life which it is the vegetarian's chief object to avoid. Some few, however, make a point of being vegetarians in the strictest sense of the word, and do not admit even dairy produce into their dietary. Nor is there the slightest difficulty in living healthily on such a diet; since the food-value of wheat-meal, oatmeal, lentils, peas, and beans, has been shown by indisputable chemical analysis to be actually higher than that of flesh-meat; in other words, one can get more nutriment from a pound of wheat or haricots than from the best beef. This was very clearly stated, and very rightly insisted on, by Dr. B. W. Richardson in his recent lectures on food. The real obstacles in the way of the adoption of a vegetarian diet are due, not to the nature or quality of the food itself, but to the difficulty in some households of obtaining the right substitutes for meat, and getting them cooked in the right manner. This is an obstacle that cannot be overlooked at the present time, but which is likely to grow less and less as the food question is more widely studied and understood.

The aims of the Vegetarian Society, as set forth in the *Vegetarian Messenger*, are "to induce habits of abstinence from the flesh of animals (fish, flesh, fowl) as food, and to promote the use of fruits, pulse, cereals, and other products of the vegetable kingdom." The reasons which cause vegetarians to aim at this change of diet may be conveniently classed under three heads.

First, on the score of health. They regard flesh as being a *stimulant* in food—as alcohol is in drink—which may lend a temporary and spasmodic accession of strength, but is inferior to vegetable products in all the permanent qualities of nutriment. They assert that a diet of which flesh-food forms no part, induces a clearer and calmer state of mind, and a greater power of resisting bodily fatigue; and they point to the significant fact that ninety-nine out of every hundred vegetarians are also total abstainers from alcoholic drinks. In a word, they think many of the diseases by which men are at present afflicted might be mitigated, or altogether prevented, by the adoption of a simpler and more natural diet; and they have the authority of the chief scientists on their side when they assert that the anatomical structure of man, as shown in the formation of the teeth and digestive organs, tends to prove that man is by nature neither carnivorous, like the lion; nor herbivorous, like the ox; but, like the ape, *frugivorous*.

Secondly, great stress is laid by vegetarians on the superior economy of their system of diet. Every housekeeper knows only too well that the butcher's bill is always the most formidable item in the weekly expenditure, and this item the vegetarian altogether avoids—a point which is of great importance in the consideration both of domestic and national economy. "Thus," says a vegetarian economist,* "one of the results of the adoption of vegetarianism would be that the money now devoted to the costliest form of food would be available for increasing the pleasures of home-life. Whilst it would wean from noxious luxuries, and practically eradicate intemperance, it would give greater scope to every form of innocent recreation and of intellectual pleasure. It would disestablish the butcher and the publican, it would aid in converting the medical profession into a preventive service, but it would secure the prosperity of the farmer and the fruit-grower, and give employment to all those arts and trades that add to the enjoyment of human life."

Thirdly, the desire to avoid taking the life of harmless animals, except under the stress of absolute necessity, is an argument which has induced many persons, at various times and in various places, to adopt the vegetarian diet.

Whether a diet of this kind is preferable to that which is at present in use, and how far it is practicable in any given case, every thoughtful person will best decide for himself; for vegetarians have no wish to force their opinions on those to whom they are distasteful. But there can be no doubt as to the *possibility* of a vegetarian diet; for vegetarianism, after all, is very far from being a new invention, however strange it may sound to some English ears. Abstinence from flesh-food was taught by Pythagoras, the famous Greek philosopher, several centuries before the commencement of the Christian era; and also by Buddha. In the mediæval Christian Church the same custom was very prevalent; moreover, the working classes of all countries have always been to a large extent, if not wholly, vegetarian. But it is only in recent years that vegetarianism has been carefully studied, and established on what may be called a scientific basis; the lectures on food-reform given by eminent medical men, the establishment of vegetarian societies and newspapers, the popularity of vegetarian restaurants—all these are signs of the times which every one nowadays is noticing and talking about. Among the beneficial results of the interest thus awakened in the question of diet, we must not omit to mention the provision of cheap meals for school-children, and the increased supply of nutritious whole-meal bread; a much-needed stimulus has also been given to the growth and importation of fruit. In short, people are beginning to discover that vegetarianism is not by any means so foolish a practice as at one time it was considered.

* "Vegetarianism and National Economy," by W. E. A. Axon, F.R.S.L.