

ARTICLE

**No. 33**

# **Vegetarianism and Occultism**

BY

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*First printed: November 1913*

*Reprinted: December 1919*

*Reprinted: January 1927*

## Vegetarianism and Occultism

IN speaking of the relation between Vegetarianism and Occultism, it may be well for us to begin by defining our terms. We all know what is meant by Vegetarianism; and although there are several varieties of it, it will not be necessary to discuss them. The vegetarian is one who abstains from eating flesh food. There are some of them who admit such animal products as are obtained without destroying the life of the animal, as, for example, milk, butter and cheese. There are others who restrict themselves to certain varieties of the vegetable—to fruit and nuts, perhaps; there are others who prefer to take only such food as can be eaten uncooked; others will take no food which grows underground, such as potatoes, turnips, carrots, etc. We need not concern ourselves with these divisions, but simply define the vegetarian as one who abstains from any food which is obtained by the slaughter of animals—of course including birds and fish.

How shall we define Occultism? The word is derived from the Latin *occultus*, hidden; so that it is the study of the hidden laws of nature. Since all the great laws of nature are in fact working in the invisible world far more than in the visible, Occultism involves the acceptance of a much wider view of nature than that which is ordinarily taken. The occultist, then, is a man who studies all the laws of nature that he can reach or of which he can hear, and as a result of his study he identifies himself with

those laws and devotes his life to the service of evolution.

How does Occultism regard Vegetarianism? It regards it very favorably, and that for many reasons. These reasons may be divided into two classes—those which are ordinary and physical, and those which are occult or hidden. There are many reasons in favor of Vegetarianism which are down here on the physical plane and patent to the eyes of anyone who will take the trouble to examine the subject; and these will operate with the occult student even more strongly than with the ordinary man. In addition to these and altogether beyond them, the occult student knows of other reasons which come from the study of those hidden laws which are as yet so little understood by the majority of mankind. We must therefore divide our consideration of these reasons into two parts, first taking the ordinary and physical.

Even these ordinary reasons may themselves be subdivided into two classes—the first containing those which are physical and as it were selfish, and secondly those which may be described as the moral and unselfish considerations.

First, then, let us take the reasons in favor of Vegetarianism which concern only the man himself, and are purely upon the physical plane. For the moment we will put aside the consideration of the effect upon others—which is so infinitely more important—and think only of the results for the man himself. It is necessary to do this, because one of the objections frequently brought against Vegetarianism is that it is a beautiful theory, but one the working of which is impracticable, since it is supposed that a man cannot live without devouring dead flesh. That objection is irrational, and is founded upon ignorance or pervers-

sion of facts. I am myself an example of its falsity; for I have lived without the pollution of flesh food—without meat, fish or fowl—for the last thirty-eight years, and I not only still survive, but have been during all that time in remarkably good health. Nor am I in any way peculiar in this, for I know some thousands of others who have done the same thing. I know some younger ones who have been so happy as to be unpolluted by the eating of flesh during the whole of their lives, and they are distinctly freer from disease than those who partake of such things. Assuredly there are many reasons in favor of Vegetarianism from the purely selfish point of view; and I will put that first, because I know that the selfish considerations will appeal most strongly to a majority of people, though I hope that in the case of those who are studying Theosophy we may assume that the moral considerations which I shall later adduce will sway them far more forcibly.

### WE WANT THE BEST

I take it that in food, as well as in everything else, we all of us want the best that is within our means. We should like to bring our lives, and therefore our daily food as a not unimportant part of our lives, into harmony with our aspirations, into harmony with the highest that we know. We should be glad to take what is really best; and if we do not yet know enough to be able to appreciate what is best, then we should be glad to learn to do so. If we think of it, we shall see that this is the case along other lines, as, for example, in music, art or literature. We have been taught from childhood that if we want our musical taste developed along the best lines, we must select

only the best music, and if at first we do not fully appreciate or understand it, we must be willing patiently to wait and to listen, until at length something of its sweet beauty dawns upon our souls, and we come to comprehend that which at first awakened no response within our hearts. If we want to appreciate the best in art, we must not fill our eyes with the sensational broadsheets of police news, or with the hideous abominations which are miscalled comic pictures; but we must steadily look and learn until the mystery of the work of Turner begins to unfold to our patient contemplation, or the grand breadth of Velasquez comes within our power to understand. So too in literature. It has been the sad experience of many that much of the best and the most beautiful is lost to those whose mental food consists exclusively of the sensational paper or the cheap novel, or of that frothy mass of waste material which is thrown up like scum upon the molten metal of life—novelettes, serials, and fragments of a type which neither teach the ignorant, nor strengthen the weak, nor develop the immature. If we wish to unfold the minds in our children, we do not leave them to their own uncultivated taste in all these things, but we try to help them to train that taste, whether it be in art, in music or in literature.

Surely then we may seek to find the best in physical as well as in mental food, and surely we must find this not by mere blind instinct, but by learning to think and to reason out the matter from the higher point of view. There may be those in the world who have no desire for the best, who are willing to remain on the lower levels and consciously and intentionally to build into themselves that which is coarse and degrading; but surely there are many who wish to rise above this, who would gladly and eagerly take the best if they only knew what it was, or if their at-

tention were directed to it. There are men and women who are morally of the highest class, who yet have been brought up to feed with the hyænas and the wolves of life, and have been taught that their necessary dietary was the corpse of a slaughtered animal. It needs but little thought to show us that this horror cannot be the highest and the purest, and that if we ever wish to raise ourselves in the scale of nature, if we ever wish that our bodies shall be pure and clean as the temples of the Master should be, we must abandon this loathsome custom, and take our place among the princely hosts who are striving for the evolution of mankind—striving for the highest and the purest in everything, for themselves as well as for their fellow-men. Let us see in detail why a vegetarian diet is emphatically the purest and the best.

#### MORE NUTRIMENT

First: Because vegetables contain more nutriment than an equal amount of dead flesh. This will sound a surprising and incredible statement to many people, because they have been brought up to believe that they cannot exist unless they defile themselves with flesh, and this delusion is so widely spread that it is difficult to awaken the average man from it. It must be clearly understood that this is not a question of habit, or of sentiment, or of prejudice; it is simply a question of plain fact, and as to the facts there is not and there never has been the slightest question. There are four elements necessary in food, all of them essential to the repair and the upbuilding of the body: (a) proteids or nitrogenous foods; (b) carbohydrates; (c) hydro-carbons or fats; (d) salts. This is the classification usually accepted among physiologists, although some recent investigations are tending to modify it to a certain extent.

Now there is no question that all of these elements exist to a greater extent in vegetables than they do in dead flesh. For instance, milk, cream, cheese, nuts, peas and beans contain a large percentage of proteids or nitrogenous matter. Wheat, oats, rice and other grains, fruits and most of the vegetables (except perhaps peas, beans, and lentils) consist mainly of the carbohydrates—that is, of starches and sugars. The hydro-carbons, or fats, are found in nearly all the proteid foods, and can also be taken in the form of butter or of oils. The salts are found practically in all foods to a greater or less extent. They are of the utmost importance in the maintenance of the body tissues, and what is called saline starvation is the cause of many diseases.

It is sometimes claimed that flesh meat contains some of these things to a larger degree than vegetables, and some tables are drawn up in such a way as to suggest this; but once more, this is a question of facts, and must be faced from that point of view. The only source of energy in dead flesh are the proteid matter contained therein, and the fat; and as the fat in it has certainly no more value than other fat, the only point to be considered is the one of proteids. Now it must be remembered that proteids have only one origin; they are organized in plants and nowhere else. Nuts, peas, beans, and lentils are far richer than any kind of flesh in these elements, and they have this enormous advantage, that the proteids are pure, and therefore contain all the energy originally stored up in them during their organization. In the animal body these proteids, which the animal has absorbed from the vegetable kingdom during its life, are constantly passing down to disorganization, during which descent the energy originally stored in them is released. Consequently what has been used already by



one animal cannot be utilized by another. The proteids are estimated in some of these tables by the amount of nitrogen contained therein, but in flesh meat there are many products of tissue-change, such as urea, uric acid, and creatine, all of which contain nitrogen and are therefore estimated as proteids, though they have no food value whatever.

Nor is this all the evil; for this tissue-change is necessarily accompanied by the formation of various poisons, which are always to be found in flesh of any kind; and in many cases the virulence of these poisons is very great. So you will observe that if you gain any nourishment from the eating of dead flesh, you obtain it because during its life the animal consumed vegetable matter. You get less of this nourishment than you ought to have, because the animal has already used up half of it, and you have along with it various undesirable substances, and even some active poisons, which are, of course, distinctly deleterious. I know that there are many doctors who will prescribe the loathsome flesh diet in order to strengthen people, and that they will often meet with a certain amount of success; though even on this point they are by no means agreed, for Dr. Milner Fothergill writes: "All the bloodshed caused by the warlike disposition of Napoleon is as nothing compared to the loss of life among the myriads of persons who have sunk into their graves through a misplaced confidence in the supposed value of beef tea." At any rate, the strengthening results can be obtained more easily from the vegetable kingdom when the science of diet is properly understood, and they can be obtained without the horrible pollution and without all the undesirable concomitants of the other system. Let me show you that I am not in all this making any unfounded assertions; let me quote to you the

opinions of physicians, of men whose names are well known in the medical world, so that you may see that I have abundant authority for all that I have said.

We find Sir Henry Thompson, F. R. C. S., saying: "It is a vulgar error to regard meat in any form as necessary to life. All that is necessary to the human body can be supplied by the vegetable kingdom. The vegetarian can extract from his food all the principles necessary for the growth and support of the body, as well as for the production of heat and force. It must be admitted as a fact beyond all question that some persons are stronger and more healthy who live on that food. I know how much of the prevailing meat diet is not merely a wasteful extravagance, but a source of serious evil to the consumer." There is a definite statement by a well-known medical man.

Then we may turn to the words of a Fellow of the Royal Society, Sir Benjamin Ward Richardson, M. D.; he says: "It must be honestly admitted that weight by weight, vegetable substance, when carefully selected, possesses the most striking advantages over animal food in nutritious value. I should like to see a vegetarian and fruit-living plan put into general use, and I believe it will be."

The well-known physician, Dr. William S. Playfair, C. B., has said quite clearly: "Animal diet is not essential to man"; and we find Dr. F. J. Sykes, B. Sc., the medical official for St. Pancras, writing: "Chemistry is not antagonistic to Vegetarianism, any more than biology is. Flesh food is certainly not necessary to supply the nitrogenous products required for the repair of tissues; therefore a well-selected diet from the vegetable kingdom is perfectly right, from the chemical point of view, for the nutrition of men."

Dr. Francis Vacher, F. R. C. S., F. C. S., remarks: "I have no belief that a man is better physically or mentally for taking flesh foods."

Dr. Alexander Haig, F. R. C. P., the leading physician of one of the great London hospitals, has written: "That it is easily possible to sustain life on the products of the vegetable kingdom needs no demonstration for physiologists, even of the majority of the human race were not constantly engaged in demonstrating it; and my researches show, not only that it is possible, but that it is infinitely preferable in every way, and produces superior powers, both of mind and body."

Dr. M. F. Coomes, in *The American Practitioner and News* of July, 1902, concluded a scientific article as follows: "Let me state first that the flesh of warm-blooded animals is not essential as a diet for the purpose of maintaining the human body in perfect health." He goes on to make some further remarks which we shall quote under our next head.

The Dean of the Faculty of Jefferson Medical College (of Philadelphia) said: "It is a well-known fact that cereals as articles of daily food hold a high place in the human economy; they contain constituents amply sufficient to sustain life in its highest form. If the value of cereal food products were better known, it would be a good thing for the race. Nations live and thrive upon them alone, and it has been fully demonstrated that meat is not a necessity."

There you have a number of plain statements, and all of them are taken from the writings of well-known men who have made a considerable study of the chemistry of foods. It is impossible to deny that man can exist without this horrible flesh diet, and further-

more that there is more nutriment in an equal amount of vegetable than of dead flesh. I could give you many other quotations, but those above mentioned are sufficient, and they are fair samples of the rest.

### LESS DISEASE

Second: Because many serious diseases come from this loathsome habit of devouring dead bodies. Here again I could easily give you a long list of quotations, but as before I will be satisfied with a few. Dr. Josiah Oldfield, M. R. C. S., L. R. C. P., writes: "Flesh is an unnatural food, and therefore tends to create functional disturbances. As it is taken in modern civilizations, it is infected with such terrible diseases (readily communicable to man) as cancer, consumption, fever, intestinal worms, etc., to an enormous extent. There is little need to wonder that flesh-eating is one of the most serious causes of the diseases that carry off ninety-nine out of every hundred people that are born."

Sir Edward Saunders tells us: "Any attempt to teach mankind that beef and beer are not necessary for health and efficiency must be good, and must tend to thrift and happiness; and, as this goes on, I believe we shall hear less of gout, Bright's disease, and trouble with the liver and the kidneys in the former, and less of brutality and wife-beating and murder in the latter. I believe that the tendency is towards vegetarian diet, that it will be recognized as fit and proper, and that the time is not far distant when the idea of animal food will be found revolting to civilized man."

Sir Robert Christison, M. D., asserts positively that "the flesh and secretions of animals affected with carbuncular diseases analogous to anthrax are so poisonous that those who eat the product of them are apt

to suffer severely—the disease taking the form either of inflammation of the digestive canal, or of an eruption of one or more carbuncles.”

Dr. A. Kingsford, of the University of Paris, says: “Animal meat may directly engender many painful and loathsome diseases. Scrofula itself, that fecund source of suffering and death, not improbably owes its origin to flesh-eating habits. It is a curious fact that the word scrofula is derived from *scrofa*, a sow. To say that one has scrofula is to say that he has swine’s evil.”

In his fifth report to the Privy Council in England we find Professor Gamgee stating that “one fifth of the total amount of meat consumed is derived from animals killed in a state of malignant disease”; while Professor A. Winter Blyth, F. R. C. S., writes: “Economically speaking, flesh food is not necessary; and meat seriously diseased may be so prepared as to look like fairly good meat. Many an animal with advanced diseases of the lung yet shows to the naked eye no appearance in the flesh which differs from the normal.”

Dr. M. F. Coomes, in the article above quoted, remarks: “We have many substitutes for meat which are free from the deleterious effects of that food upon the animal economy—namely, in the production of rheumatism, gout and all other kindred diseases, to say nothing of cerebral congestion, which frequently terminates in apoplexy and venal diseases of one kind and another, migrain and many other such forms of headache resulting from the excessive use of meat, and often produced when meat is not eaten to excess.”

Dr. J. H. Kellogg remarks: “It is interesting to note that scientific men all over the world are awakening to the fact that the flesh of animals as food is not

a pure nutriment, but is mixed with poisonous substances, excrementitious in character, which are the natural results of animal life. The vegetable stores up energy. It is from the vegetable world—the coal and the wood—that the energy is derived which runs our steam engines, pulls our trains, drives our steamships, and does the work of civilization. It is from the vegetable world that all animals, directly or indirectly, derive the energy which is manifested by animal life through muscular and mental work. The vegetable builds up, the animal tears down. The vegetable stores up energy; the animal expands energy. Various waste and poisonous products result from the manifestation of energy, whether by the locomotive or the animal. The working tissues of the animal are enabled to continue their activity only by the fact that they are continually washed clean by the blood, a never-ceasing stream flowing through and about them, carrying away the poisonous products resulting from their work as rapidly as they are formed. The venous blood owes its character to these poisons, which are removed by the kidneys, lungs, skin and bowels. The flesh of a dead animal contains a great quantity of these poisons, the elimination of which ceases at the instant of death, although their formation continues for some time after death. An eminent French surgeon recently remarked that ‘beef tea is a veritable solution of poisons.’ Intelligent physicians everywhere are coming to recognize these facts, and to make a practical application of them.”

Here again you see we have no lack of evidence; and many of the quotations with regard to the introduction of poisons into the system through flesh food are not from the vegetarian doctors, but from those who still hold it right to eat sparingly of corpses, but yet

have studied to some extent the science of the matter. It should be remembered that dead flesh can never be in a condition of perfect health, because decay commences at the moment when the creature is killed. All sorts of products are being formed in this process of retrograde change; all of these are useless, and many of them are positively dangerous and poisonous. In the ancient scriptures of the Hindus we find a very remarkable passage, which refers to the fact that even in India some of the lower castes at that early period commenced to feed on flesh. The statement made is that in ancient times only three diseases existed, one of which was old age; but that now, since people had commenced to eat flesh, seventy-eight new diseases had arisen. This shows us that the idea that disease might come from the devouring of corpses has been recognized for thousands of years.

### MORE NATURAL TO MAN

Third: Because man is not naturally made to be carnivorous, and therefore this horrible food is not suited to him. Here again let me give you a few quotations to show you what authorities are ranged upon our side of this matter. Baron Cuvier himself writes: "The natural food of man, judging from his structure, consists of fruit, roots and vegetables"; and Professor Ray tells us: "Certainly man was never made to be a carnivorous animal." Sir Richard Owen, F. R. C. S., writes: "Anthropoids and all the Quadrumana derive their alimentation from fruits, grains and other succulent vegetable substances, and the strict analogy which exists between the structures of these animals and that of man clearly demonstrates his frugivorous nature."

Another Fellow of the Royal Society, Professor William Lawrence, writes: "The teeth of man have

not the slightest resemblance to those of carnivorous animals; and whether we consider the teeth, the jaws or the digestive organs, the human structure closely resembles that of the frugivorous animals."

Once more, Dr. Spencer Thompson remarks: "No physiologist would dispute that man ought to live on vegetarian diet"; and Dr. Sylvester Graham writes: "Comparative anatomy proves that man is naturally a frugivorous animal, formed to subsist upon fruits, seeds, and farinaceous vegetables."

The desirability of the vegetarian diet will of course need no argument for anyone who believes in the inspiration of the scriptures, for it will be remembered that God, in speaking to Adam while in the Garden of Eden, said: "Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree in which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat." It was only after the fall of man, when death came into the world, that a more degraded idea of feeding came along with it; and if now we hope to rise again to Edenic conditions, we must surely commence by abolishing unnecessary slaughter performed in order to supply us with horrible and degrading food.

#### GREATER STRENGTH

Fourth: Because men are stronger and better on a vegetarian diet. I know that people say: "You will be so weak if you do not eat dead flesh." As a matter of fact this is untrue. I do not know whether there may be any people who find themselves weaker on a diet of vegetables, but I do know this: that in many athletic contests recently the vegetarians have proved



themselves the strongest and the most enduring—as for example in the recent cycling races in Germany, where all those who took high places in the race were vegetarian. There have been many such trials, and they show that, other things being equal, the man who takes pure food succeeds better. We have to face facts, and in this case the facts are all ranged on one side, as against foolish prejudices and loathsome lust on the other. The reason was plainly given by Dr. J. D. Craig, who writes:

“Vigor of body is often boasted by flesh-eaters, particularly if they live mostly in the open air; but there is this peculiarity about them, that they have not the endurance of vegetarians. The reason of this is that flesh meat is already on the downward path of retrograde change, and as a consequence its presence in the tissues is of short duration. The impetus given to it in the body of the animals from which it was taken is reinforced by another impulse in the second one, and for these reasons what energy it does contain is soon given out, and there are urgent demands for more to take its place. The flesh-eater, then, may do a large amount of work in a short time if well fed. He soon gets hungry, however, and, when so, becomes weak. On the other hand, vegetable products are of slow digestion; they contain all of the original store of energy, and no poisons; their retrograde change is less rapid than meat, having just commenced, and therefore their force is released more slowly with less loss, and the person nourished by them can work for a long time without food if necessary, and without discomfort. The people in Europe who abstain from flesh are of the better and more intelligent class, and the subject

of endurance has been approached and thoroughly investigated by them. In Germany and England a number of notable athletic contests that required endurance have been made between flesh-eaters and vegetarians, with the result that the vegetarian has invariably come off victorious."

We shall find, if we investigate, that this fact has been known for a long time, for even in ancient history we find traces of it. It will be recollected that of all the tribes of Greeks, the strongest and the most enduring, by universal admission and reputation, were the Spartans; and the simplicity of their vegetable diet is a matter of common knowledge. Think too of the Greek athletes — those who prepared themselves with such care for participation in the Olympian and Isthmian games.

If you will read the classics you will find that these men, who in their own line surpassed all the rest of the world, lived upon figs, nuts, cheese and maize. Then there were the Roman gladiators — men on whose strength depended their life and fame; and yet we find that their diet consisted exclusively of barley-cakes and oil; they knew well that this was the more strengthening food.

All these examples show us that the common and persistent fallacy that one must eat flesh in order to be strong has no foundation in fact; indeed the exact contrary is true. Charles Darwin remarked in one of his letters: "The most extraordinary workers I ever saw, the laborers in the mines of Chili, live exclusively on vegetable food, including many seeds of leguminous plants." Of the same miners Sir Francis Head writes: "It is usual for the copper-miners of Central Chili to carry loads of ore of two hundred pounds weight up eighty perpendicular

yards twelve times a day; and their diet is entirely vegetarian—a breakfast of figs and small loaves of bread, a dinner of boiled beans, and a supper of roasted wheat.”

Mr. F. T. Wood in his *Discoveries at Ephesus* writes: “The Turkish porters in Smyrna often carry from four hundred to six hundred pounds weight on their backs, and the captain one day pointed out to me one of his men who had carried an enormous bale of merchandise weighing eight hundred pounds up an incline into an upper warehouse; so that with this frugal diet their strength was unusually great.”

Of these same Turks Sir William Fairbairn has said: “The Turk can live and fight where soldiers of any other nationality would starve. His simple habits, his abstinence from intoxicating liquors, and his normal vegetarian diet, enable him to suffer the greatest hardships and to exist on the scantiest and simplest of foods.”

I myself can bear witness to the enormous strength displayed by the vegetarian Tamil coolies of the South of India, for I have frequently seen them carry loads which astonished me. I remember in one case standing upon the deck of a steamer, and watching one of these coolies take a huge case upon his back and walk slowly but steadily down a plank to the shore with it and deposit it in a shed. The captain, standing by me, remarked with surprise: “Why, it took four English laborers to get that case on board in the docks at London!” I have also seen another of these coolies, after having had a grand piano put on his back, carry it unaided for a considerable distance; yet these men are entirely vegetarian, for they live chiefly upon rice and water, with perhaps occasionally a little tamarind for flavoring.

On the same subject Dr. Alexander Haig, whom we have already quoted, writes: "The effect of getting free from uric acid has been to make my bodily powers quite as great as they were fifteen years ago; I scarcely believe that even fifteen years ago I could have undertaken the exercise in which I now indulge with absolute impunity—with freedom from fatigue and distress at the time and from stiffness next day. Indeed I often say that it is impossible now to tire me, and relatively I believe this is true." This distinguished physician became a vegetarian because, from his study of the diseases caused by the presence of uric acid in the system, he discovered that flesh-eating was the chief source of this deadly poison. Another interesting point which he mentions is that his change of diet brought about in him a distinct change of disposition—that whereas before he found himself constantly nervous and irritable, he now became much steadier and calmer and less angry; he fully realizes that this is due to the change in his food.

If we require any further evidence, we have it close to our hand in the animal kingdom. We shall observe that there the Carnivora are not the strongest, but that all the work of the world is done by the Herbivora—by horses, mules, oxen, elephants and camels. We do not find that men can utilize the lion or the tiger, or that the strength of these savage flesh-eaters is at all equal to that of those who assimilate directly from the vegetable kingdom.

#### LESS ANIMAL PASSION

Fifth: Because the eating of dead bodies leads to indulgence in drink, and increases animal passions in man. Mr. H. B. Fowler, who has studied and lectured on dipsomania for forty years, declares that the use of

flesh foods, by the excitation that it exercises on the nervous system, prepares the way for habits of intemperance in everything; and the more flesh is consumed, the more serious is the danger of confirmed alcoholism. Many experienced physicians have made similar experiments and wisely act on them in their treatment of dipsomaniacs. The lower part of man's nature is undoubtedly intensified by the habit of feeding upon corpses. Even after eating a full meal of such horrible material, a man still feels unsatisfied, for he is still conscious of a vague, uncomfortable sense of want, and consequently he suffers greatly from nervous strain. This craving is the hunger of the bodily tissues, which cannot be renewed by the poor stuff offered to them as food. To satisfy this vague craving, or rather to appease these restless nerves so that it will no longer be felt, recourse is often had to stimulants. Sometimes alcoholic beverages are taken; sometimes an attempt is made to allay these feelings with black coffee, and at other times strong tobacco is used in the endeavor to soothe the irritated, exhausted nerves. Here we have the beginning of intemperance, for in the majority of cases intemperance began in the attempt to allay with alcoholic stimulants the vague, uncomfortable sense of want which follows the eating of impoverished food—food that does not feed.

There is no doubt that drunkenness, and all the poverty, wretchedness, disease and crime associated with it, may frequently be traced to errors of feeding. We might follow out this line of thought indefinitely. We might speak of the irritability, occasionally culminating in insanity, which is now acknowledged by all authorities to be a frequent result of erroneous feeding. We might mention a hundred familiar symptoms of indigestion, and explain that indigestion is always

the result of incorrect feeding. Surely, however, enough has been said to indicate the importance and far-reaching influence of a pure diet upon the welfare of the individual and of the race.

Mr. Bramwell Booth, the chief of the Salvation Army, has issued a *pronunciamento* upon this subject of Vegetarianism, in which he speaks strongly and decidedly in its favor, giving a list of no less than nineteen good reasons why men should abstain from the eating of flesh.

He insists that a vegetarian diet is necessary to purity, to chastity, and to the perfect control of the appetites and passions which are so often the source of great temptation. He remarks that the growth of meat-eating among the people is one of the causes of the increase of drunkenness, and that it also favors indolence, sleepiness, want of energy, indigestion, constipation and other like miseries and degradations. He also states that eczema, piles, worms, dysentery and severe headaches are frequently brought on by flesh diet, and that he believes the great increase in consumption and cancer during the last hundred years to have been caused by the corresponding increase in the use of animal food.

### ECONOMY

Sixth: Because the vegetable diet is in every way cheaper as well as better than flesh. In the encyclical just mentioned, Mr. Booth gives as one of his reasons for advocating it, that "a vegetarian diet of wheat, oats, maize and other grains—lentils, peas, beans, nuts and similar food, is more than ten times as economical as a flesh diet. Meat contains half its weight in water, which has to be paid for as though it were meat. A vegetable diet, even if we allow cheese,

butter and milk, will cost only about a quarter as much as a mixed diet of flesh and vegetables. Tens of thousands of our poor people, who have now the greatest difficulty to make ends meet after buying flesh food, would, by the substitution of fruit and vegetables and other economical foods, be able to get along in comfort."

There is also an economic side of this question which must not be ignored. Note how many more men could be supported by a certain number of acres of land which were devoted to the growing of wheat, than by the same amount of land which was laid out in pasture. Think, too, for how many more men healthy work upon the land would be found in the former case than in the latter; and I think you will begin to see that there is a great deal to be said from this point of view also.

### THE SIN OF SLAUGHTER

Hitherto we have been speaking of what we have called the physical and selfish considerations which should make a man give up the eating of this dead flesh and turn him, even though only for his own sake, to the purer diet. Let us now think for a few moments of the moral and unselfish considerations connected with his duty towards others. The first of these—and this does seem to me a most terrible thing—is the awful sin of unnecessary murdering these animals. Those who live in Chicago know well how this ghastly, ceaseless slaughter goes on in their midst, how they feed the greater part of the world by wholesale butchery, and how the money made in this abominable business is stained with blood, every coin of it. I have shown clearly upon irreproachable testimony that all this is unnecessary; and if it is unnecessary it is a crime.

The destruction of life is always a crime. There may be certain cases in which it is the lesser of two evils; but here it is needless and without a shadow of justification, for it happens only because of the selfish, unscrupulous greed of those who coin money out of the agonies of the animal kingdom in order to pander to the perverted tastes of those who are sufficiently depraved to desire such loathsome aliment. Remember it is not only those who do the obscene work, but those who by feeding on this dead flesh encourage them and make their crime remunerative, who are guilty before God of this awful thing. Every person who partakes of this unclean food has his share in the indescribable guilt and suffering by which it has been obtained. It is universally recognized in law that *qui facit per alium, facit per se*—whatsoever a man does through another, he does himself.

A man will often say: "But it would make no difference to all this horror if I alone ceased to eat meat." That is untrue and disingenuous. First, it *would* make a difference, for although you may consume only a pound or two each day, that would in time amount to the weight of an animal. Secondly, it is not a question of amount, but of complicity in a crime; and if you partake of the results of a crime, you are helping to make it remunerative, and so you share in the guilt. No honest man can fail to see that this is so. But when men's lower lusts are concerned they are usually dishonest in their view, and decline to face the plain facts. There surely can be no difference of opinion as to the proposition that all this horrible, unnecessary slaughter is indeed a terrible crime.

Another point to be remembered is that there is dreadful cruelty connected with the transport of these miserable animals, both by land and sea, and there is



often dreadful cruelty in the slaughtering itself. Those who seek to justify these loathsome crimes will tell you that an endeavor is made to murder the animals as rapidly and painlessly as possible; but you have only to read the reports to see that in many cases these intentions are not carried out, and appalling suffering ensues.

### THE DEGRADATION OF THE SLAUGHTERMAN

Yet another point to be considered is the wickedness of causing degradation and sin in other men. If you yourselves had to use the knife or the pole-axe, and slaughter the animal before you could feed upon its flesh, you would realize the sickening nature of the task and would soon refuse to perform it. Would the delicate ladies who devour sanguinary beefsteaks like to see their sons working as slaughtermen? If not, then they have no right to put this task upon some other woman's son. We have no right to impose upon a fellow citizen work which we ourselves should decline to do. It may be said that we force no one to undertake this abominable means of livelihood; but that is a mere tergiversation, for in eating this horrible food we are making a demand that *some one* shall brutalize himself, that *some one* shall degrade himself below the level of humanity. You know that a class of men has been created by the demand for this food—a class of men which has an exceedingly bad reputation. Naturally those who are brutalized by such unclean work as this, prove themselves brutal in other relations as well. They are savage in their disposition and bloodthirsty in their quarrels; and I have heard it stated that in many a murder case evidence has been found that the criminal employed the peculiar twist of the knife which is characteristic of the slaughterman. You must surely recognize that

here is an unspeakably horrible work, and that if you take any part in this terrible business—even that of helping to support it—you are putting another man in the position of doing (not in the least for your need, but merely for the gratification of your lusts and passions) work that you would under no circumstances consent to do for yourself.

Then we should surely remember that we are all of us hoping for the time of universal peace and kindness—a golden age when war shall be no more, a time when man shall be so far removed from strife and anger that the whole conditions of the world will be different from those which now prevail. Do you not think that the animal kingdom also will have its share in that good time coming—that this horrible nightmare of wholesale slaughter will be removed from it? The really civilized nations of the world know far better than this; It is only that we of the West as yet a young race, and still have many of the crudities of youth; otherwise we could not bear these things amongst us even for a day. Beyond all question the future is with the vegetarian. It seems certain that in the future—and I hope it may be in the near future—we shall be looking back upon this time with disgust and with horror. In spite of all its wonderful discoveries, in spite of its marvelous machinery, in spite of the enormous fortunes that have been made in it, I am certain that our descendents will look back upon this age as one of only partial civilization, and in fact but little removed from savagery. One of the arguments by which they will prove this will assuredly be that we allowed among us this wholesale, unnecessary slaughter of innocent animals—that we actually batted on it and made money out of it, and that we even created a class of beings who did this dirty

work for us, and that we were not ashamed to profit by the result of their degradation.

All of these are considerations referring only to the physical plane. Now let me tell you something of the occult side of all this. Up to the present I have made to you many statements—strong and definite, I hope—but every one of them, statements which you can prove for yourself. You can read the testimony of well-known doctors and scientific men; you may test for yourselves the economic side of the question; you may go and see, if you will, how all these different types of men contrive to live so well upon vegetarian diet. All that I have said hitherto is thus within your reach. But now I am abandoning the field of ordinary physical reasoning, and taking you up to the level where you have, naturally, to take the word of those who have explored these higher realms. Let us then turn now to the hidden side of all this—the occult.

### OCCULT REASONS

Under this heading also we shall have two sets of reasons—those which refer to ourselves and our own development, and those which refer to the great scheme of evolution and our duty towards it; so that once more we may classify them as selfish and unselfish, although at a much higher level than before. I have, I hope, clearly shown in the earlier part of this lecture that there is simply no room for discussion in regard to this question of Vegetarianism; the whole of the evidence and of the considerations are entirely on one side, and there is absolutely nothing to be said in opposition to them. This is even more strikingly the case when we come to consider the occult part of our argument. There are some students hovering round the fringes of Occultism who are not yet pre-

pared to follow its dictates to the uttermost, and therefore do not accept its teachings when it interferes with their personal habits and desires. Some such have tried to maintain that the question of food can make little difference from the occult standpoint; but the unanimous verdict of all the great schools of Occultism, both ancient and modern, has been definite on this point, and has asserted that for all true progress purity is necessary, even on the physical plane, and in matters of diet, as well as in far higher matters.

In many books and lectures I have already explained the existence of the different planes of nature and of the vast unseen world all about us; and I have also had occasion to refer often to the fact that man has within himself matter belonging to all these higher planes, so that he is furnished with a vehicle corresponding to each of them, through which he can receive impressions and by means of which he can act. Can these higher bodies of man be in any way affected by the food which enters into the physical body with which they are so closely connected? Assuredly they can, and for this reason. The physical matter in man is in close touch with the astral and mental matter—so much so that each is to a great extent a counterpart of the other. There are many types and degrees of density among astral matter, for example, so that it is possible for one man to have an astral body built of coarse and gross particles, while another may have one which is much more delicate and refined. As the astral body is the vehicle of the emotions, passions and sensations, it follows that the man whose astral body is of the grosser type will be chiefly amenable to the grosser varieties of passion and emotion; whereas the man who has a finer astral body will find that its particles most readily vibrate in response to higher

and more refined emotions and aspirations. The man, therefore, who builds gross and undesirable matter into his physical body is thereby drawing into his astral body matter of a coarse and unpleasant type as its counterpart.

We all know that on the physical plane the effect of over-indulgence in dead flesh is to produce a coarse, gross appearance in the man. That does not mean that it is only the physical body which is in an unlovely condition; it means also that those parts of the man which are invisible to our ordinary sight, the astral and the mental bodies, are not in good condition either. Thus a man who is building himself a gross and impure physical body is building for himself at the same time coarse and unclean astral and mental bodies as well. That is visible at once to the eye of the developed clairvoyant. The man who learns to see these higher vehicles sees at once the effects on the higher bodies produced by impurity in the lower; he sees at once the difference between the man who feeds his physical vehicle with pure food and the man who puts into it this loathsome decaying flesh. Let us see how this difference will affect the man's evolution.

### IMPURE VEHICLES

It is clear that a man's duty with regard to himself is to develop all his different vehicles as far as possible, in order to make them finished instruments for the use of the soul. There is a still higher stage in which that soul itself is being trained to be a fit instrument in the hands of the Deity, a perfect channel for the divine grace; but the first step towards this high aim is that the soul itself shall learn thoroughly to control the lower bodies, so that there shall be in them no thought or feeling except those which the soul allows. All these

vehicles therefore should be in the highest possible condition of efficiency; all should be pure and clean and free from taint; and it is obvious that this can never be, so long as the man absorbs into the physical encasement such undesirable constituents. Even the physical body and its sense perceptions can never be at their best unless the food is pure. Anyone who adopts vegetarian diet will speedily begin to notice that his sense of taste or of smell is far keener than it was when he fed upon flesh, and that he is now able to discern a delicate difference of flavor in foods which before he had thought of as tasteless, such as rice and wheat.

The same thing is true to a still greater extent with regard to the higher bodies. Their senses cannot be clear if impure or coarse matter is drawn into them; anything of this nature clogs and dulls them, so that it becomes more difficult for the soul to use them. This is a fact which has always been recognized by the student of Occultism; you will find that all those who in ancient days entered upon the Mysteries were men of the utmost purity, and of course invariably vegetarian. Carnivorous diet is fatal to anything like real development, and those who adopt it are throwing serious and unnecessary difficulties in their own way.

I am well aware that there are other and still higher considerations which are of greater weight than anything upon the physical plane, and that the purity of the heart and of the soul is more important to a man than that of the body. Yet there is surely no reason why we should not have both; indeed, the one suggests the other, and the higher should include the lower. There are quite enough difficulties in the way of self-control and self-development; it is surely worse than foolish to go out of our way to add another and a very considerable one to the list. Although

it is true that a pure heart will do more for us than a pure body, yet the latter can certainly do a great deal; and we are none of us so far advanced along the road towards spirituality that we can afford to neglect the great advantage that it gives us. Anything that makes our path harder than it need be is emphatically something to be avoided. In all cases this flesh food undoubtedly makes the physical body a worse instrument, and puts difficulties in the way of the soul by intensifying all the undesirable elements and passions belonging to these lower planes.

Nor is this serious effect during physical life the only one of which we have to think. If, through introducing loathsome impurities into the physical body, the man builds himself a coarse and unclean astral body, we have to remember that it is in this degraded vehicle that he will have to spend the first part of his life after death. Because of the gross matter which he has built into it, all sorts of undesirable entities will be drawn into association with him and will make his vehicles their home, and find a ready response within him to their lower passions. It is not only that his animal passions are more easily stirred here on earth, but in addition to this he will suffer acutely from the working out of these desires after death. Here again, looked at even from the selfish point of view, we see that occult considerations confirm the straight-forward common-sense of the arguments on the physical plane. The higher sight, when brought to bear upon this problem, shows us still more vividly how undesirable is the devouring of flesh, since it intensifies within us that from which we most need to be free, and therefore, from the point of view of progress, that habit is a thing to be cast out at once and forever.

## MAN'S DUTY TOWARDS NATURE

Then there is the far more important unselfish side of the question—that of man's duty towards nature. Every religion has taught that man should put himself always on the side of the will of God in the world, on the side of good as against evil, of evolution as against retrogression. The man who ranges himself on the side of evolution realizes the wickedness of destroying life; for he knows that, just as he is here in this physical body in order that he may learn the lessons of this plane, so is the animal occupying his body for the same reason, that through it he may gain experience at his lower stage. He knows that the life behind the animal is the Divine Life, that all life in the world is Divine; the animals therefore are truly our brothers, even though they may be younger brothers, and we can have no sort of right to take their lives for the gratification of our perverted tastes—no right to cause them untold agony and suffering merely to satisfy our degraded and detestable lusts.

We have brought things to such a pass with our miscalled "sport" and our wholesale slaughterings, that all wild creatures fly from the sight of us. Does that seem like the universal brotherhood of God's creatures? Is that your idea of the golden age of world-wide kindness that is to come—a condition when every living thing flees from the face of man because of his murderous instincts? There is an influence flowing back upon us from all this—an effect which you can hardly realize unless you are able to see how it looks when regarded with the sight of the higher plane. Every one of these creatures which you so ruthlessly murder in this way has its own thoughts and feelings with regard to all this; it has horror, pain and indignation, and an intense but unexpressed feeling of the hideous injustice of it all. The whole



atmosphere about us is full of it. Twice lately I have heard from psychic people that they felt the awful aura or surroundings of Chicago even many miles away from it. Mrs. Besant herself told me the same thing years ago in England—that long before she came in sight of Chicago she felt the horror of it and the deadly pall of depression descending upon her, and asked: “Where are we, and what is the reason that there should be this terrible feeling in the air?” To sense the effect as clearly as this, is beyond the reach of the person who is not developed; but, though all the inhabitants may not be directly conscious of it and recognize it as Mrs. Besant did, they may be sure that they are suffering from it unconsciously, and that that terrible vibration of horror and fear and injustice is acting upon every one of them, even though they do not know it.

#### GHASTLY UNSEEN RESULTS

The feelings of nervousness and profound depression which are so common there, are largely due to that awful influence which spreads over the city like a plague-cloud. I do not know how many thousands of creatures are killed every day, but the number is very large. Remember that every one of these creatures is a definite entity—not a permanent, reincarnating individuality like yours or mine, but still an entity which has its life upon the astral plane, and persists there for a considerable time. Remember that every one of these remains to pour out his feelings of indignation and horror at all the injustice and torment which has been inflicted upon him. Realize for yourself the terrible atmosphere which exists about those slaughterhouses; remember that a clairvoyant can see the vast hosts of animal souls, that he knows how strong are their feelings of horror and resentment,

and how these recoil at all points upon the human race. They react most of all upon those who are least able to resist them—upon the children, who are more delicate and sensitive than the hardened adult. That city is a terrible place in which to bring up children—a place where the whole atmosphere, both physical and psychic, is charged with fumes of blood and with all that that means.

I read an article only the other day, in which it was explained that the nauseating stench which rises from those Chicago slaughterhouses, and settles like a fatal miasma over the city, is by no means the most deadly influence that comes up from that Christian hell for animals, though it is the breath of certain death to many a mother's darling. The slaughterhouses make not only a pest-hole for the bodies of children, but for their souls as well. Not only are the children employed in the most revolting and cruel work, but the whole trend of their thoughts is directed towards killing. Occasionally one is found too sensitive to endure the sights and sounds of that ceaseless, awful battle between man's cruel lust and the inalienable right of every creature to its own life. I read how one boy, for whom a minister had secured a place in the slaughterhouse, returned home day after day, pale and sick and unable to eat or sleep, and finally came to that minister of the gospel of the compassionate Christ and told him that he was willing to starve if necessary, but that he could not wade in blood another day. The horrors of the slaughter had so affected him that he could no longer sleep. Yet this is what many a boy is doing and seeing from day to day, until he becomes hardened to the taking of life; and then some day, instead of cutting the throat of a lamb or a pig, he kills a man, and straightway we turn our lust for slaughter upon him in turn, and think that we have done justice.

I read that a young woman, who does much philanthropic work in the neighborhood of these pest-houses declares that what most impresses her about the children is that they seem to have no games except games of killing, that they have no conception of any relation to animals except the relation of the slaughter to the victim. This is the education which so-called Christians are giving to the children of the slaughterhouse—a daily education in murder; and then they express surprise at the number and brutality of the murders in that district. Yet your Christian public goes on serenely saying its prayers and singing its psalms and listening to its sermons, as if no such outrages were being perpetrated against God's children in that sink-hole of pestilence and crime. Surely the habit of eating dead flesh has produced a moral apathy among us. Are you doing well, do you think, in rearing your future citizens among surroundings of such utter brutality as this? Even on the physical plane this is a terribly serious matter, and from the occult point of view it is unfortunately far more serious still; for the occultist sees the psychic results of all this, sees how these forces are acting upon the people and how they intensify brutality and unscrupulousness. He sees what a center of vice and of crime you have created, and how from it the infection is gradually spreading until it affects the whole country, and even the whole of what is called civilized humanity.

The world is being affected by it in many ways which most people do not in the least realize. There are constant feelings of causeless terror in the air. Many of your children are unnecessarily and inexplicably afraid; they feel terror of they know not what—terror of the dark, or when they are alone for a few moments. Strong forces are playing about us for which you cannot account, and you do not realize that this all comes from the fact that the whole at-

mosphere is charged with the hostility of these murdered creatures. The stages of evolution are closely interrelated, and you cannot do wholesale murder in this way upon your younger brothers without feeling the effect terribly among your own innocent children. Surely a better time shall come, when we shall be free from this horrible blot upon our civilization, this awful reproach upon our compassion and our sympathy; and when that comes we shall find presently that there will be a vast improvement in these matters, and by degrees we shall all rise to a higher level and be freed from all these instinctive terrors and hatreds.

### THE BETTER TIME TO COME

We might all be freed from it very soon if men and women would only think; for the average man is not after all a brute, but means to be kind if he only knew how. He does not think; he goes on from day to day, and does not realize that he is taking part all the time in an awful crime. But facts are facts, and there is no escape from them; every one who is partaking of this abomination is helping to make this appalling thing a possibility, and undoubtedly shares the responsibility for it. You know that this is so, and you can see what a terrible thing it is; but you will say: "What can we do to improve matters—we who are only tiny units in this mighty, seething mass of humanity?" It is only by units rising above the rest and becoming more civilized that we shall finally arrive at a higher civilization of the race as a whole. There is a Golden Age to come, not only for man but for the lower kingdoms, a time when humanity will realize its duty to its younger brothers—not to destroy them, but to help them and train them, so that we may receive from them, not terror and hatred, but love and devotion and friendship, and reasonable co-

operation. A time will come when all the forces of Nature shall be intelligently working together towards the final end, not with constant suspicion and hostility, but with universal recognition of that Brotherhood which is ours because we are all children of the same Almighty Father.

Let us at least make the experiment; let us free ourselves from complicity in these awful crimes, let us set ourselves to try, each in our own small circle, to bring nearer that bright time of peace and love which is the dream and the earnest desire of every true-hearted and thinking man. At least we ought surely to be willing to do so small a thing as this to help the world onward towards that glorious future; we ought to make ourselves pure, our thoughts and our actions as well as our food, so that by example as well as by precept we may be doing all that in us lies to spread the gospel of love and of compassion, to put an end to the reign of brutality and terror, and to bring nearer the dawn of the great kingdom of righteousness and love when the will of our Father shall be done upon earth as it is in heaven.