



GUESTS AT CERES' TABLE

Vegetarians and Vegetable Eating from 1885 to 1915

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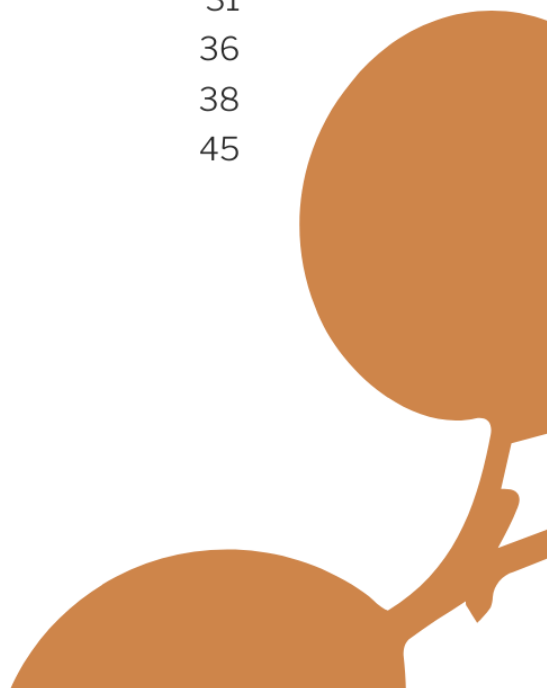
Dedication

To Axa and Raj, who sometimes eat their vegetables,
but always make me proud.



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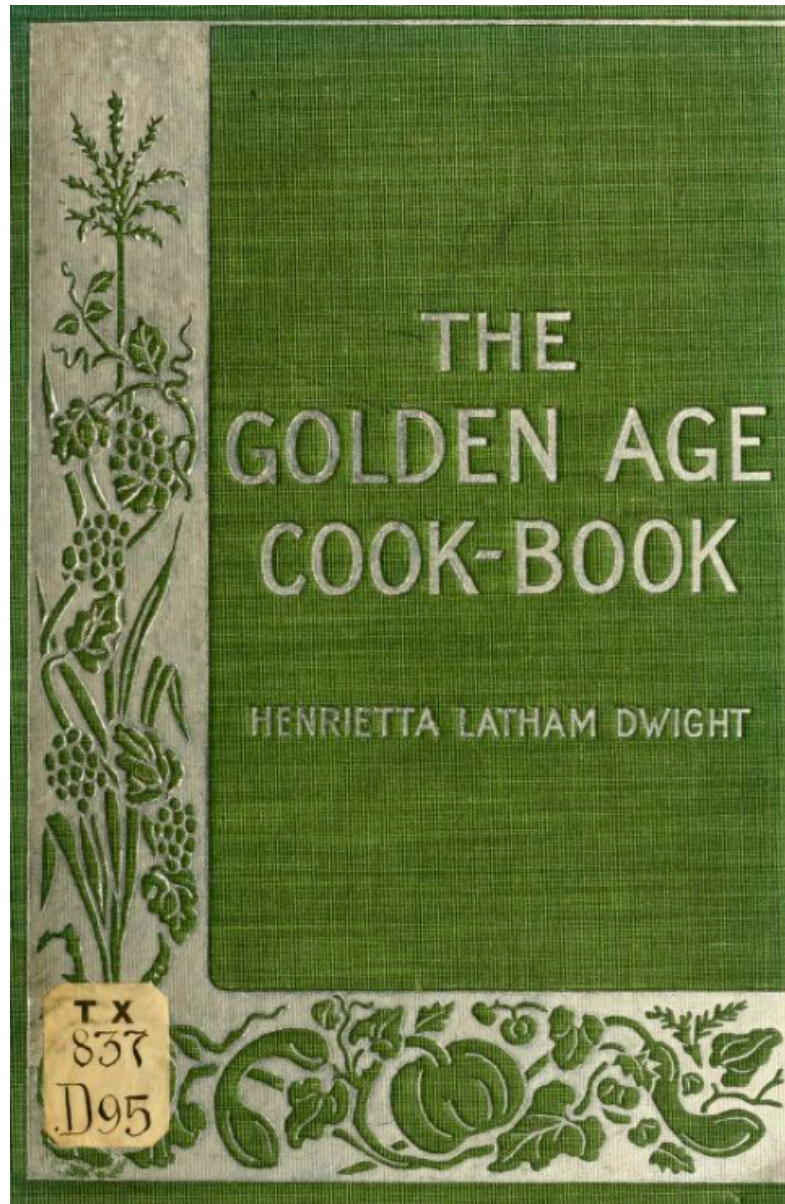
Introduction

Like other nineteenth-century reform movements in Great Britain and the United States, the vegetarian movement sought to bring about lasting change. It intertwined with other movements as disparate as abolitionism on the one hand and eugenics on the other. However, the change it sought was not merely institutional or social. The type of reform vegetarians advocated was at its heart something that progressed on an intimate, individual level. Changing the food one ate meant changing one's relationship to history, tradition, culture, religion—one's daily routines, carried out with family, in the intimacy of domestic spaces. But it also involved changes to one's habits as a consumer, whether that meant sourcing (or creating!) new foods, growing one's own, or even foraging in the forest for edibles. And since the foods we eat are the building blocks of our embodied selves, vegetarianism represented a fundamental change to the very substance of the human body. Because it intruded deeply into the personal realm, involving the universal daily act of eating, the discourse on eating vegetables was larger than the vegetarian movement itself, touching not only other reform movements, but facets of culture connected to class, gastronomy, colonial ties, gender and religion, to name but a few.

A strange feature of late nineteenth and early twentieth-century vegetarianism—given its name—was that in many ways it was more about not eating meat than it was about eating vegetables¹. It is perhaps for this reason that although vegetarians had plenty to say about the virtues of vegetables, studies of vegetarianism tend to lack nuance when they situate these arguments beside what others were saying about eating vegetables, focusing largely on reactionary statements and missing other strands of discourse around vegetable eating within the mainstream. As someone who grew up as a semi-vegetarian a hundred years later, I have always been interested in the periphery of the vegetarian movement,

¹ Some members of the movement attempted to address this discrepancy with alternative names such as 'Fleshless Diet', or 'Bloodless Diet'; however, vegetarianism remained by far the most common term, and was used in the names of the main organisations representing the movement in both Great Britain and the United States.

and how it influences the surrounding culture.² Therefore, my research takes this wider view, examining British and American vegetarian, vegetable and other cookbooks to situate the vegetarian imperative towards plant-based eating in the context of contemporary attitudes towards vegetables themselves, whether connected to vegetarianism or not.



Cover of the 1898 *Golden Age Cook Book* by Henrietta Latham Dwight³

² My mother's approach to family meals was heavily influenced by the vegetarian movement of the 1970s, and various cookbooks of that era, including several from Moosewood Restaurant and Laurel's Kitchen, still grace my kitchen shelves. My paternal grandfather was a pomologist, and passed his love of cultivating edible plants on to my father, so I grew up surrounded by vegetables.

³ Henrietta Latham Dwight, *The Golden Age Cook Book* (New York: The Alliance publishing company, 1898), <http://archive.org/details/goldenagecookboo00dwig>, cover.

Vegetarianism was a social movement with a clear solution: eating more plants and less meat. But what problem were vegetarians trying to solve by getting people to eat their vegetables? And how did the vegetarian movement draw from and influence other strands of thought and practice having to do with vegetable eating during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries? My research reveals a complex mosaic of historical, literary, aesthetic, colonial, socioeconomic, nutritional and yes, gustatory reasons people were eating vegetables. In the process, it helps us understand the layered, permeable boundaries of social movements, and how they both mobilise and shape related discourse in the cultural climate that surrounds them.

Historiography

The period of my study, from 1885 to 1915, was an era of change. Veit describes how colonial expansion and increasing travel among the middle class enlarged the world, and brought exotic fruits and vegetables to people's plates.⁴ Meanwhile, advances in transport, refrigeration and preservation enabled food to travel when people did not, even as a rise in income allowed them to purchase a wider variety in and out of season. Advances in medical and nutritional science brought changing perceptions of what was healthy to eat, while shifting strata of status and class influenced what was fashionable to serve. Different dynamics played out among the poorer classes, many of whom were making the transition to city life, and meeting new challenges to the procurement and preparation of fresh vegetables.

It was an age of extremes, which has gone by many names and been periodised in a variety of contrasting ways. These different but overlapping frameworks for understanding the decade and a half on either side of the turn of the twentieth century shed some light on the complexity of the environment in which the vegetarian movement operated. They also hint at the strengths and biases of existing studies. Shishko, for instance, comes at the subject of nineteenth-century culinary writing from a distinct Victorian Studies background, and situates her

⁴ Helen Zoe Veit, *Food in the American Gilded Age*, American Food in History (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2017), 9-11.

research in the context of the ‘Victorian reformist movement’.⁵ Across the Atlantic, Veit characterises the same period as ‘post-Civil War’ and ‘Gilded Age’ in her class-focused study on what Americans between 1870 and 1900 were eating.⁶ Meanwhile, in her PhD thesis on food reformer and cookbook author Sarah Tyson Rorer, Berndt denominates the period between 1880 and 1915 the ‘Progressive Era’.⁷ These terms are to some extent geographical as well as temporal, and grounded in national historical traditions. All of them overlap with and are influenced by the Eurocentric ‘Pre-War’ period at the tail end of the Long Nineteenth Century, described by Martin Breugel as the ‘Age of Empire’ in the fifth volume of his *Cultural History of Food*.⁸

Periodisation matters, because it influences everything about how a researcher approaches a topic or historical phenomenon, and like any paradigm, imparts useful tools along with implicit assumptions. It is precisely the richness of this multiplicity of perspectives that first attracted me to the period in question. However, to separate Shishko’s insights on Victorian ekphrastic culinary writings, for example, from Veit’s rich source material on the opulent Gilded Age banquets happening simultaneously across the Atlantic is to miss crucial connections between two national gastronomic cultures that informed and drew on one another. The same is true of the vegetarian movement itself. While Shprintzen argues that American vegetarianism ‘diverged significantly from its British counterpart’, both he and Spencer agree—in their histories of American and British vegetarianism respectively—on the existence of ‘frequent transatlantic exchange’.⁹ Therefore, to include insights from these different paradigms without becoming fully entangled in any of them, in my research I sidestep the nomenclature of periodisation altogether. Instead, I take a transnational view, including both Great Britain and the United States, as well as the international/colonial culinary influences on both.

Finally, studies of reform movements tend to examine them longitudinally, building a narrative of development over time, as Shprintzen does for American

⁵ Bonnie Shishko, ‘Epistemologies of the Kitchen: Art, Science, and Nineteenth-Century British Culinary Writing’ (Ph.D. Thesis, Indiana University, 2016), vii.

⁶ Veit, *Gilded Age*, 1-2.

⁷ Sarah Berndt, “‘When Science Strikes the Kitchen, It Strikes Home’: The Influence of Sarah Tyson Rorer in the Progressive Era Kitchen, 1880-1915’ (M.A. Thesis, University of Delaware, 2017), xi.

⁸ Martin Breugel, *A Cultural History of Food in the Age of Empire* (London [etc.]: Berg, 2012).

⁹ Adam D. Shprintzen, *The Vegetarian Crusade: The Rise of an American Reform Movement, 1817-1921*, 1st edition. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013), 3; Colin Spencer, *Vegetarianism: A History* (London: Grub Street Cookery, 2016).

vegetarianism. However, these movements existed in an environment rich in other movements, cultural trends and peripheral influences. So my research opts for breadth rather than length, examining the vegetarian movement in the context of the many other vegetable-eating threads interwoven with it during a relatively short period of fifteen years on each side of the turn of the twentieth century.

Theory

The literature tends to explain social movements based on models that emphasise their apartness from wider culture. Yeh describes how the demarcation of boundaries in a particular social movement both defines and in some sense creates that movement, at least in recognisable form.¹⁰ Conn further argues that these boundaries are generated by the frames movement leaders employ, which ‘construct and diagnose problems’ enabling adherents to situate themselves within the movement’s boundaries while placing others outside.¹¹ However, such traditional top-down approaches to the construction of social movements often miss the importance of interactions and practices that happen within the private sphere, or the effect of the ‘rhetorical footprint’ of a movement on the wider culture, as argued by Malesh.¹²

I contend that social movements can be better understood as layered phenomena incorporating overlapping belief systems and practices. Such an approach reveals previously hidden tensions and points of confluence with mainstream culture. Understanding competing framing systems both within and adjacent to the core movement helps us see it not as a single, bounded unit, but a set of interlocking spheres of influence around a broader social topic. My case study, vegetarianism around the turn of the twentieth century, illustrates the importance of considering both positive and negative framing systems when constructing models of such a movement. While vegetarianism was (and is) often framed both by researchers and members of the movement in terms of not eating meat, as its name suggests, it can be alternatively considered as a movement in favour of eating

¹⁰ Hsin-Yi Yeh, ‘Boundaries, Entities, and Modern Vegetarianism: Examining the Emergence of the First Vegetarian Organization’, *Qualitative Inquiry* 19, no. 4 (2013): 298–309, 298.

¹¹ Sarrah G. Conn, ‘Guess Who’s Coming to Dinner? Frames, Identities, and Privilege in the U.S. Vegetarian and Vegan Movement’ (Ph.D. Thesis, Florida State University, 2015), 2.

¹² Patricia Marie Malesh, ‘Rhetorics of Consumption: Identity, Confrontation, and Corporatization in the American Vegetarian Movement’ (Ph.D. Thesis, University of Arizona, 2005), 11.

vegetables. Because previous researchers have typically adhered to the negative framing, I focus instead on the positive one, examining the overlapping spheres of influence dealing with this topic, and how they interact with the core vegetarian movement.

This expansion offers tremendous scope for illuminating the wider influences on vegetarianism, as well as its full impact on society. A comparable approach allowed Neely, for instance, to situate vegetarianism in the context of related social movements like teetotalism and women's suffrage, but also the seemingly unrelated activism of Thoreau, whose dietary experiments in *Walden*—argues Neely—'extended liberalism and anticapitalist resistance into uniquely material and embodied territory'.¹³ Similarly, besides acknowledging the influence of religion on nineteenth-century vegetarianism, Miller invites us to look beyond the obvious comparisons with other social movements to find influences on its development from sources such as the medical field, public health, food adulteration, and interest in animal welfare related to vivisection and public zoos, to name a few.¹⁴

My research examines the vegetarian movement as part of a larger series of overlapping framings around eating vegetables at the turn of the twentieth century to ask my central question: what problem(s) did vegetarianism attempt to solve? Under three broad categories (cultural, economic and physical framings), I interrogate the layered belief systems and practices surrounding vegetarianism. Zooming out with this set of wider lenses allows me to trace the development of key ideas within the movement. Going beyond moral and ethical arguments to show the underlying economic pressures and opportunities, for instance, illuminates how the movement was connected to seemingly unrelated historical trends like market gardening or home economics. Exploration of the different types of problems vegetarians attempted to solve through their movement evinces the permeation of their arguments into industry, scientific and medical research, and even constructions of race and cultural hegemony, revealing how the vegetarian movement intertwined with many of the salient issues of the day. My excavation through the layers of vegetable eating in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries demonstrates

¹³ Michelle C. Neely, 'Embodied Politics: Antebellum Vegetarianism and the Dietary Economy of *Walden*', *American Literature* 85, no. 1 (2013): 33–60, 56.

¹⁴ Ian Miller, 'Evangelicalism and the Early Vegetarian Movement in Britain c.1847-1860', *Journal of Religious History* 35, no. 2 (2011): 199–210, 204–205.

the efficacy of this approach in facilitating a more complete and nuanced understanding of social movements in general.

Material and Method

I began my research mid-pandemic, so my thesis advisor suggested I set myself the challenge of building a corpus entirely based on digitally-available sources. Fortunately, Archive.org houses an extensive collection of cookbooks from this period. Since it functions more as an online aggregator of digitised archival material than a true archive in the professional sense, one major challenge is mobilising the available search tools to assemble sources catalogued using varied metadata systems. However, this challenge is balanced by the exciting opportunity to access material from libraries, archives and university collections around the world.¹⁵ In compiling my vegetable-themed sources I used permutations of search terms like ‘vegetarian cookery’, ‘vegetable cookbook’, etc., as well as searching directly for vegetable-related cookbooks mentioned either in my secondary sources or by cookbook authors. I also did a complete survey of the Boston Public Library’s Cookbook Collection for the period in question, to gain an overview of what general cookbooks of the period (as opposed to specifically vegetarian or vegetable cookbooks) were saying about vegetables.

I examined 45 cookbooks, with publication dates spread fairly evenly from 1885 to 1915. Twenty-five were published in the UK, and 28 in the United States.¹⁶ My sources were of three main types:

1. Vegetarian cookbooks (i.e. associated with the vegetarian movement’s avoidance of meat);
2. Vegetable cookbooks (focused on vegetable recipes but without an ideological component);
3. General cookbooks (containing only chapters/sections of vegetable recipes).

¹⁵ The institutions holding my cookbooks include, among others, the Library of Congress, Leeds University Library, California Digital Library, University of Glasgow Library, HathiTrust, Boston Library and Archive.org’s Cookbook and Home Economics Collection, which combines books from the Young Research Library Department of Special Collections at UCLA, The Bancroft Library at The University of California, Berkeley, and the Prelinger Library.

¹⁶ Eight of which were published in both locations.

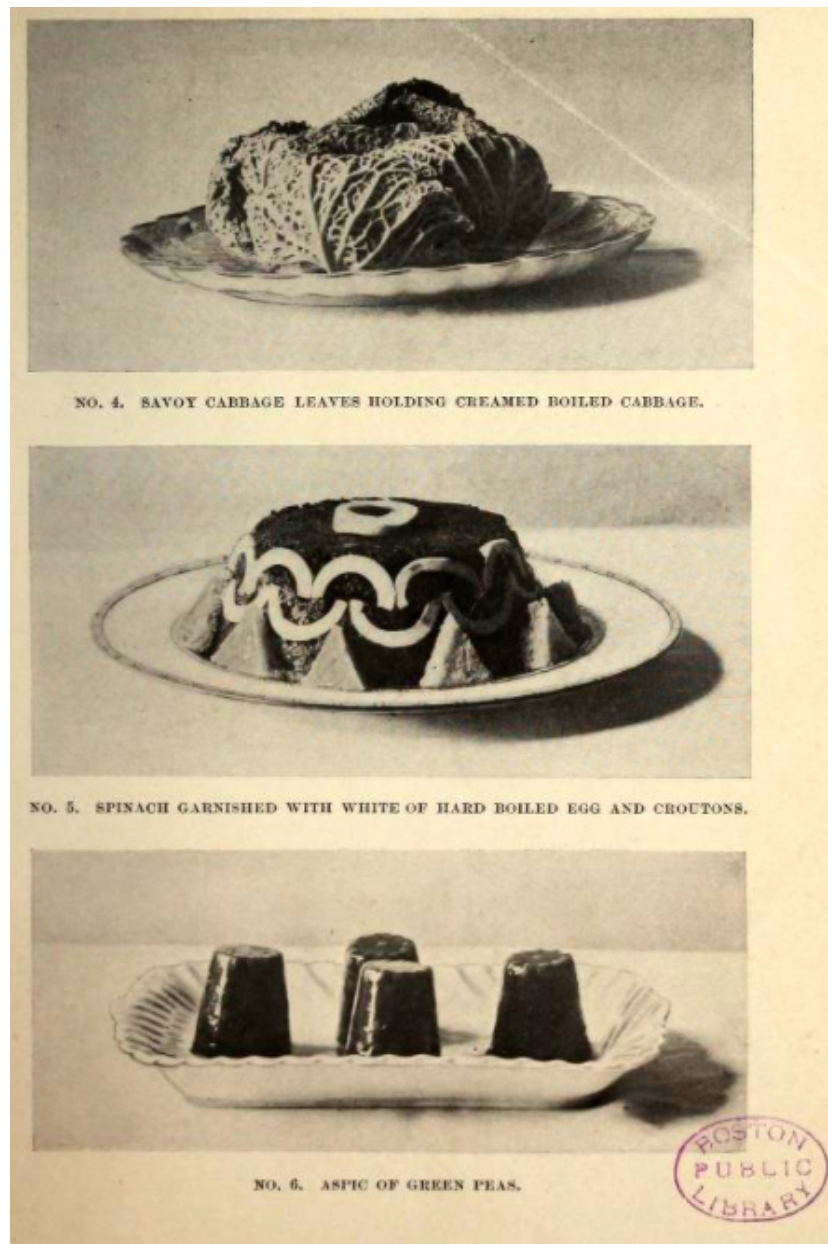
While many cookbooks appear to have multiple purposes, or could be included in various sub-genres, I grouped them into categories based on what appeared to be their primary thrust(s):

Type of Cookbook	Number
Ideological Vegetarian Cookbooks	10
Vegetable or Vegetarian Volumes in a Cookbook Series	9
Cooking School Textbooks or Household manuals	6
Cookbooks with a Primary Focus on Health and Nutrition	6
Cookbooks Promoting Specific Products	4
Texts on Mushroom Identification and Culinary Preparation	3
Community Cookbooks	3
Catering or Entertaining Manuals	3
Gardening Manuals with Accompanying Recipes	2
Religious (Fast-Day) Cookbooks	2

The average length was 221 pages, although my corpus included texts as short as 32 pages and as long as 630. Thirty-two were written by women, and 15 by men.¹⁷ Many were illustrated (although by no means all), and these illustrations appeared to serve a number of purposes. Some books included diagrams or drawings meant to directly illustrate the textual instructions, for example, early twentieth-century black and white photographs depicting elaborate vegetable hors-d'œuvres. Other illustrations were more decorative, including floral or vegetal embellishments, portraits of famous vegetarians, and representations of cooks in kitchens. Still others were visual or graphical representations of paratextual information, such as nutritional charts or depictions of comparative anatomy. In some

¹⁷ Some were co-authored.

cases, advertisements also seemed to serve an illustrative function, presenting kitchen tools, plant-based foods, supplements, healthy babies and more.



NO. 4. SAVOY CABBAGE LEAVES HOLDING CREAMED BOILED CABBAGE.

NO. 5. SPINACH GARNISHED WITH WHITE OF HARD BOILED EGG AND CROUTONS.

NO. 6. ASPIC OF GREEN PEAS.

Black and white photographs depicting vegetable hors-d'oeuvres from the 1902 *Luncheons: A Cook's Picture Book* by Mary Ronald.¹⁸

In Chapter 3, because much of the nutritional terminology used by authors is esoteric to the modern ear, I have brought in some articles from period medical journals. Putting these articles in dialogue with what cookbook authors have to say

¹⁸ Mary Ronald, *Luncheons: A Cook's Picture Book: A Supplement to the Century Cook Book* (New York: Century Co., 1902), <http://archive.org/details/luncheonscookspi00rona>, 19.

gives context on professional medical opinions of the time, while bringing out associated issues of science, authority and related social debates.

Around the turn of the twentieth century—as now—the definition of vegetables was slippery, and could include any of the following:

- Any edible plant material (flowers, fruits, seeds, roots, leaves, stems, etc.);
- Savory plant parts rather than sweet (i.e., vegetables as opposed to fruits);
- Only parts of the plant not involved in sexual reproduction (e.g., excluding flowers, fruits and seeds, and therefore also nuts, grains and pulses);
- Foods not derived from plants at all (e.g., fungi like mushrooms and truffles or algae like edible seaweeds).

The cookbook authors in my study utilise different implicit or explicit combinations of the above definitions. I have therefore followed their example and cast my net wide, considering vegetables as a cultural and culinary construct rather than a botanical one.¹⁹

Why cookbooks as a means to get at the heart of a social movement? First and most obviously, because the movement in question was concerned with food, and cookbooks offer unique insights into the structure and transmission of foodways.²⁰ However, cookbooks also amplify voices that might otherwise remain underrepresented in our understanding of vegetarianism during the period. As with many historical topics, research on the vegetarian movement undertaken using more traditional sources tends to emphasise the role of men, who dominated the ‘serious’ publications and literary genres of the day. This bias is misleading, not least because as a movement based around food selection and preparation, vegetarianism had everything to do with the kitchen, a traditional province of women and acknowledged centre of female expertise. None were more cognisant of this disconnect than the women of the movement themselves. Beatrice Lindsay, magazine editor and vegetarian advocate, proclaimed at the Annual Meeting of the Vegetarian Society in Britain in 1891, ‘The theory of vegetarianism has been mostly advocated by

¹⁹ One period cookbook author acknowledged this difficulty, complaining that ‘the word vegetables, used in the greengrocer sense, with an application to cabbages, turnips, potatoes, etc., has been a thorn in the flesh of the vegetarians, who have vainly tried to find a better designation’. Thomas Low Nichols, *Penny Vegetarian Cookery: The Science and the Art of Selecting and Preparing a Pure, Healthful, and Sufficient Diet*, ed. T. R. Allinson (London: Nichols-Brill Co. Ltd, 1891), <http://archive.org/details/b21450936>, 23.

²⁰ Jill Nussel, ‘Heating Up the Sources: Using Community Cookbooks in Historical Inquiry’, *History Compass* 4, no. 5 (2006): 956–61, 957.

gentlemen; the practice of it must be undertaken by the ladies. We need an army of lady speakers and teachers of plain cookery.’²¹

This ‘army’ included cookbook authors, since cookbooks are specifically concerned with teaching the practice of cookery. In fact, Shprintzen describes an ‘explosion of vegetarian cookbooks’ in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.²² During this time, the women who did the vast majority of home cooking were unlikely to trust a man with cooking advice, and therefore the majority of cookbook authors were women.²³ In her recent survey of forty years of cookbook historiography, Dantec-Lowry argues that cookbooks illuminate not only the lives of writers, but also readers, revealing ‘connections between women in the kitchen and the rest of the community’.²⁴ Accordingly, during the past few decades, cookbooks have come into their own as a valuable window into domestic spheres that might otherwise remain obscure and difficult to access. However, the scope of what can be learned from cookbooks extends well beyond the domestic. Cookbooks are not simply collections of recipes, nor is their sole purpose teaching practical culinary skills. Like other types of texts, they can function as transmitters of culture, vehicles for propaganda or sites of commercial advertising.²⁵ They often impart knowledge far outside of food preparation, touching on fields as disparate as history, nutrition, etiquette, agriculture and many more.

I explore these various aims of cookbooks, interrogating their function in the vegetarian movement and what they can tell us about perceptions of eating vegetables during the period in question. While the recipes themselves yield significant insights, even more important for my research are what Notaker describes as the paratexts that surround them.²⁶ Foremost among these are introductory

²¹ Liam Young, ‘Eating Serial: Beatrice Lindsay, Vegetarianism, and the Tactics of Everyday Life in the Late Nineteenth Century’, *Societies (Basel, Switzerland)* 5, no. 1 (2015): 65–88.

²² Shprintzen, *Vegetarian Crusade*, 134.

²³ Henry Notaker, *A History of Cookbooks: From Kitchen to Page Over Seven Centuries*, California Studies in Food and Culture (Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2017), 45. Notaker’s observation is borne out in my source material.

²⁴ Hélène Le Dantec-Lowry, ‘Reading Women’s Lives in Cookbooks and Other Culinary Writings: A Critical Essay’, *Revue française d’études américaines* 116, no. 2 (2008): 99–122.

²⁵ See, for example, the Mussolini regime’s mobilisation of *La Cucina Futurista* to bring its fascist regime into the kitchen in Carol Helstosky, ‘Recipe for the Nation: Reading Italian History Through La Scienza in Cucina and La Cucina Futurista’, *Food and Foodways* 11, no. 2–3 (1 January 2003): 113–40; community cookbooks and the transmission of migrant culture in America in Donna R Gabaccia, *We Are What We Eat* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1998); and the dissemination of free cookbooks by food commodity brands to promote new products in Berndt, ‘Science Strikes’.

²⁶ Notaker, *History of Cookbooks*, 130.

materials, variously denominated as preface, introduction, or forward, which often express the ‘reasons and motivations authors have for writing a cookbook’, as well as giving clues to the intended audience, types of authority claimed by the author, and the moral, nutritional, religious, or other influence she hopes to exert.²⁷ Other relevant paratexts include title pages, dedications, introductory epigrams, tables of contents, appendices or other following material, charts and graphs, illustrations, advertisements, testimonials, introductions to chapters or recipes, and lists of other books in the series or by the author.

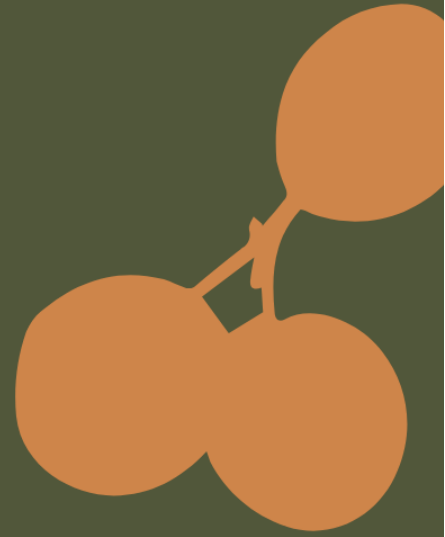
The arguments cookbook authors made for eating vegetables fell naturally into three categories:

1. Cultural rationales (including history, religion, national dominance, social advancement, literature and aesthetic or gustatory pleasure);
2. Economic rationales (including alleviating poverty, encouraging thrift and self-sufficiency and selling proprietary vegetarian products);
3. Physical rationales (including cultivating health and strength, eliminating disease and fulfilling evolutionary imperatives).

I devote a chapter to each category, comparing the ways in which vegetarian cookbooks encouraged the eating of vegetables with rationales for eating vegetables in vegetable-based non-vegetarian cookbooks, as well as more general cookbooks that discuss vegetables. This juxtaposition of different types of cookbooks illuminates not only what vegetarians were saying about the virtues of eating vegetables, but also the context in which they were saying it, and what others with different motivations and within different culinary traditions were saying on the same subject. Taking this wide view of vegetarianism and the cultural/culinary milieu in which it operated, and sourcing it from the very cookbooks that helped people implement such reform in their own kitchens offers the prospect of shining a light on not only the motivations and methods of the movement, but also its intimate practicalities.

²⁷ Notaker, *History of Cookbooks*, 136.

CHAPTER 1: THE KNOWLEDGE OF MEDEA, AND OF CIRCE



The Cultural Side of Eating Vegetables

'Cookery means the knowledge of Medea, and of Circe, and of Calypso, and of Helen, and of Rebekah, and of the Queen of Sheba. It means the knowledge of all herbs, and fruits, and balms, and spices; and of all that is healing and sweet in the fields and groves, and savory in meats; it means carefulness, and inventiveness, and watchfulness, and willingness, and readiness of appliances. It means the economy of your great-grandmothers, and the science of the modern chemist; it means much tasting and no wasting; it means English thoroughness and French art and Arabian hospitality; and, in fine, it means that you are to be perfectly and always "ladies";—"loaf givers".'

-Ruskin

Chapter 1

The Knowledge of Medea and of Circe

The history of food and cookery tends to confound the notion that eating has ever been wholly (or even perhaps primarily) about satisfying hunger or providing caloric energy. Late nineteenth and early twentieth-century vegetarian cookbook authors mobilised a host of moral, gustatory, aesthetic, historical and cultural arguments for the superiority of those who ate vegetables over those subsisting on meat. However, they were far from the only ones making these sorts of claims. At the turn of the twentieth century, eating vegetables was viewed as a way to improve oneself, whether that meant hosting fancier dinner parties, becoming a more accomplished lady, or even purifying one's soul. To accentuate both the importance and sheer multifariousness of these cultural rationales for the consumption of vegetables, I have dedicated the first section of my analysis to exploring them. Here we will visit with Catholics making it through a meatless Lent, and Protestant philosophers of the vegetarian movement. We will admire the multisensory delights of edible plants and learn how they can be further aestheticised in the kitchen. And we will follow historical, literary and cultural threads that begin in the primeval Eden of Genesis and extend to the far-flung reaches of Empire. Champions inside and outside the vegetarian movement invoked everyone from Shakespeare to the invitees of one's next society dinner to argue the virtues of vegetables.

In Pursuit of a Bloodless Diet

Given the expansion of the vegetarian movement during the second half of the nineteenth century, it is not surprising that many cookbooks of the period rely heavily on moral arguments for the consumption of vegetables. However, these vegetarians did not see themselves as the first to promote focusing on vegetables or abstaining from meat as a moral or religious imperative. Along with quoting from the Bible, vegetarian cookbooks often referenced Pythagoras or other classical sources as models for vegetarian living, with the obvious implication that fuller emulation of

one's favourite religious or philosophical figure was possible through diet.²⁸ And one did not have to go back to ancient times to encounter religious reasons for dietary restrictions. Certain branches of early Christianity eschewed meat, and in the middle ages the Church began to officially sanction periods of fasting, during which adherents avoided certain foods, including meat. Those who were weak or ill were exempted from this proscription, since they needed what was perceived as the superior nourishment offered by animal products.²⁹ Based on the writings of the early physician Galen, meat was believed to be a hearty, warming food, and one of its attendant properties was that it excited sexual desires. The church-appointed 'fast days' were intended as a time to refrain from indulging in all sorts of physical appetites, including sex.³⁰ Therefore, abstaining from meat was doubly functional, protecting Christians from both gluttony and sexual excess during these religiously-mandated times.

The Long Days of Lent

Lent was the most important of these fasting periods, and by far the longest. Lasting as it did for 40 days, it posed a challenge for those providing meals for the faithful. A cook might be able to make do through a few ingredient modifications on a single fast day, but several weeks of meatless meals required ingenuity and special recipes. Accordingly, from the early Renaissance, many cookbooks include sections of recipes intended for fast days, or else suggestions for modifying existing recipes to serve the needs of such days.³¹ By the turn of the twentieth century, Notaker minimises the importance of such cookbooks in the Anglophone world, dismissing the genre with the note that 'A couple of small books with exclusively Lenten dishes were published in the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries, but they dropped the references to Lent in later editions'.³² Besides the books he references, however, I found two more cookbooks of this persuasion, both published during the last decade of the nineteenth century, suggesting that the market for this type of religiously-motivated recipes continued as a focus, while incorporating other notions

²⁸ Notaker, *History of Cookbooks*, 223.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 214.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² *Ibid.*, 221.

of vegetable-based cooking to expand the idea of fast-day cooking into a concept that also appealed to non-Catholic cooks.

The two cookbooks have similar titles: *Fast day and vegetarian cookery* and *Fast Day Cookery, Or, Meals Without Meat*. Indeed, they both avoid the term ‘Lent’ in their titles and prefaces, perhaps as a way to bring in a non-Catholic readership; unlike Notaker’s referenced cookbooks, however, they keep the religious idea of fast days.³³ Grace Johnson, author of *Fast Day Cookery, Or, Meals Without Meat*, makes this intention explicit in her preface, stating that she ‘had in view both the Anglican and Roman communions’.³⁴ With some circumlocution, E. M. Cowen and S. Beaty-Pownall manage to convey a similar idea while avoiding any actual mention of Catholicism.³⁵ Significantly, however, both books add a second descriptor to their ‘fast day’ titles, making clear that they deal with vegetarian, or meatless cookery. Possibly this was an attempt to reach what was then a burgeoning market of people interested in vegetarianism—or at least eating more vegetables—as a general way of life, and not only on fast days. Lending credence to this interpretation is Cowen and Beaty-Powell’s introductory explanation that their cookbook is intended for ‘those who desire to utilise more largely the fruits of the earth, whether they dignify it as a religious duty, or adopt it simply as a hygienic convenience’.³⁶ Both books include fish, eggs and dairy products, but also many vegetable-based dishes. We will examine some key differences between their intended audiences and approaches later.

Cookbooks of the Vegetarian Movement

While the old Catholic traditions of fast-day cookery persisted to some extent, the majority of vegetable cookbooks containing religious language during this period have their roots in vegetarian ideologies adopted by radical nineteenth-century Protestant sects as part of sweeping visions of social change. The vegetarian movement had separate leaders and societies on both sides of the Atlantic; still,

³³ Grace Johnson, *Fast Day Cookery, Or, Meals Without Meat* (London: Griffith Farran & Co., 1893), <http://archive.org/details/FastDayCookeryOrMealsWithoutMeat>; E. M. Cowen and S. Beaty-Pownall, *Fast Day and Vegetarian Cookery* (London: Horace Cox, 1895), <http://archive.org/details/b21538128>.

³⁴ Johnson, *Fast day*, v.

³⁵ Cowen and Beaty-Pownall, *Meals Without Meat*, 1.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 2. More will be said about the late nineteenth-century meaning of ‘hygiene’ and its relation to cookery—and vegetarian cookery in particular—in Chapter 3.

there was frequent communication and cross-pollination between them.³⁷ In the United States by the mid-nineteenth century, according to Shprintzen, vegetarianism was the province of a series of dogmatic communities who viewed it as a ‘catalyst for total social reform, including the emancipation of slaves, the extension of suffrage to women, and the end of oppressive economics’.³⁸ For these early vegetarians, a vegetable-based diet was a way to transform not only themselves, but the world. In the United Kingdom, the Vegetarian Society was founded in 1847 by a group of Christians led by a former Anglican minister.³⁹ While it was later also formally incorporated into religious systems by groups like Shakers and Theosophists, in some ways, vegetarianism itself could be seen as a sort of self-contained religious sect. One constant that continued throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was the prevalence of what Shprintzen terms vegetarian ‘conversion narratives’.⁴⁰ These were personal stories of an individual’s adoption of vegetarianism, shared as a way to justify the diet, defend it against detractors, build community among adherents, and recruit others. This apologetic practice was so entrenched by the early twentieth century that Eustace Miles critiques it in his 1906 *New Cookery of Unproprietary Foods*, decrying the tendency towards ‘glossing over facts in order to make “converts”’.⁴¹

As the movement evolved, it began to focus more on individual than community improvement, and adopt strategies to market itself better to the mainstream; however, it retained many of the original rationales for taking nourishment from the vegetable kingdom, perhaps partly because new cookbook authors continued to quote earlier sources. In the introductions of cookbooks attempting to convert their readers to vegetarianism, Biblical verses evoking an idealised vegetarian Eden share space with arguments for a ‘fleshless’ diet rooted in chemistry, physiology, analogies to the animal kingdom, dietetics, personal health testimonials, and more. Still, there was often a gulf between the lofty philosophy of vegetarianism and its practice as a workable lifestyle. Notaker describes how ‘the

³⁷ Shprintzen, *Vegetarian Crusade*, 91.

³⁸ *Ibid*, 4.

³⁹ Samantha Calvert, ‘A Taste of Eden: Modern Christianity and Vegetarianism’, *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 58, no. 3 (July 2007): 461–81, 462.

⁴⁰ Samantha Calvert, ‘Eden’s Diet: Christianity and Vegetarianism 1809 – 2009’ (Ph.D. Thesis, University of Birmingham, 2012), 34.

⁴¹ Eustace Miles, *The New Cookery of Unproprietary Foods* (London: S.W. Partridge, 1906), <http://archive.org/details/b21538013>, 8. Chapter 2 will delve into the meaning of ‘proprietary’ and ‘unproprietary’ foods.

male “prophets” of vegetarianism floated at high intellectual altitudes with their philosophical, religious, medical, and historical reflections, while women with experience in the kitchen were expected to convert their ideas into practical cookery’.⁴²



“ALL A-GROWING, ALL A-BLOWING”

[“Miss NICHOLSON spoke of the facility with which vegetarians might, if they pressed their demands upon their tradesmen, obtain vegetarian boots and vegetarian gloves.”—*Report in Daily Paper of Meeting of the Vegetarian Federal Union.*]

OUR LUNATIC CONTRIBUTOR THINKS THIS AN EXCELLENT IDEA. BUT WHY NOT HAVE VEGETARIAN COATS, AND HATS, TOO—IN FACT, VEGETARIAN CLOTHING FROM HEAD TO FOOT?

1898 Cartoon from Punch satirising the supposed impracticality of the vegetarian lifestyle⁴³

⁴² Notaker, *History of Cookbooks*, 228.

⁴³ Cartoon, ‘All A-Growing, All A-Blowing’, *Punch*, February 12, 1898, <https://punch.photoshelter.com/image/I0000hd1ve.SyPsM>, accessed May 12, 2021. The ‘Miss Nicholson’ mentioned in the caption is likely Florence I. Nicholson, who wrote *The Jubilee Cookbook*, discussed on the following page.

This gendered division is reflected in cookbooks, which were far more likely to be written by women than men. To lend authority and erudition to their recipe collections, female authors tended to include quotations from male vegetarian thinkers in their prefaces or introductions. In her 1898 *Golden Age Cook Book*, Henrietta Latham Dwight includes excerpts from the writings of no fewer than seven such men, all of whom bear medical or academic titles.⁴⁴ Sometimes a cookbook author would recruit a man to write the entire introduction. As well as including a selection of “Thoughts Worth Reading” by a similar list of eminent men at the end of *The Jubilee Cookery Book* in 1897, Florence I. Nicolson asked Arnold Hills to pen her a persuasive preface.⁴⁵ Hills was an early proponent of the ‘vital qualities’ of a raw diet, set forth in his 1892 book *Vital Food*, and had been a speaker at the International Vegetarian Congress in Chicago in 1893, where he celebrated the vegetarian diet as ‘an indication of humanity’s progress from savagery to civility’.⁴⁶ Embracing herbivorous eating, according to thinkers like Hill, could modify human nature, turning people into kinder, gentler versions of themselves, and ultimately leading humankind into a better future.

This tradition of male introductions for female recipes goes back to the beginning of nineteenth-century vegetarianism in Britain, and some of these old cookbooks were still in print decades later. Mrs. Brotherton’s *Vegetable Cookery*, first printed anonymously in 1821, with the author identified only as ‘A member of the society of Bible Christians’, is a fascinating example of the evolution of this practice.⁴⁷ The ornate frontispiece for the 1829 third edition advertises ‘an Introduction Recommending Abstinence from Animal Foods and Intoxicating Liquors’, reflecting the close association of vegetarianism and temperance at that time.⁴⁸ Although both the book and its passionate introduction are credited to an

⁴⁴ As well as in two cases, knighthood. Henrietta Latham Dwight, *The Golden Age Cook Book* (New York, The Alliance publishing company, 1898), <http://archive.org/details/goldenagecookboo00dwtig>, 7-8.

⁴⁵ Florence I. Nicolson, *The Jubilee Cookery Book : Vegetarian Recipes* (London : West End Press, 1897), <http://archive.org/details/b21538220>, 3-4.

⁴⁶ See Notaker, *History of Cookbooks*, 231; and Shprintzen, *Vegetarian Crusade*, 158. This 1893 International Vegetarian Congress, held as part of the World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago, was a significant event both in bringing vegetarianism to the attention of a wider audience and gathering vegetarians of different areas and persuasions together. We will return to the connection of vegetarianism with social Darwinism in Chapter 3.

⁴⁷ Colin Spencer, *Vegetarianism*, 344.

⁴⁸ Martha Brotherton, *Vegetable Cookery: With an Introduction, Recommending Abstinence from Animal Food and Intoxicating Liquors* (London: E. Wilson & by Messrs. Clarke & others, 1829), <http://archive.org/details/b21531821>, frontispiece.

ungendered 'member of the Bible Christian Church', the recipes were compiled by Martha Brotherton, while her husband, Joseph Brotherton—not only a member, but the Church's minister—wrote the introduction.⁴⁹



Decorative frontispiece for the 1829 edition of *Vegetable Cookery*⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Martha Brotherton, *Vegetable Cookery: With an Introduction, Recommending Abstinence from Animal Food and Intoxicating Liquors* (London: Effingham Wilson [et al.], 1833), <http://archive.org/details/b21530877>; Samantha Calvert, 'Eden's Diet: Christianity and Vegetarianism 1809 – 2009' (Ph.D. Thesis, University of Birmingham, 2012), 60.

⁵⁰ Brotherton, *Vegetable Cookery*, 1829, frontispiece. This image was reprinted in subsequent editions before the respective title pages.

Significantly, a fourth edition in 1833 identifies the still anonymous author as ‘A lady’, a common practice in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries for books authored by women, and perhaps a bid to bring in a more general audience than could be attracted by the original reference to a relatively small religious movement. Brotherton published a heavily revised fifth edition renamed *Vegetarian Cookery* in 1852, with a lengthy new introduction quoting learned sources like Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, incorporating the latest scientific research on dietetics, and attributed only to ‘a gentleman eminently connected with the Vegetarian movement’.⁵¹ James Simpson, the author of this anonymous 1852 introduction, was in fact the president of the newly formed Vegetarian Society in Britain.⁵² He organised a series of public vegetarian banquets during the 1850s, based on the recipes and menus in the book.⁵³ This publicity—combined with the fact that even several decades after its publication, the cookbook still had little competition in the vegetarian cookery space—appears to have granted it almost Biblical status by the time of this revised fifth edition. Finally, in 1891—70 years after the cookbook was first published—the title page of the seventh edition openly credits ‘the late Mrs. Brotherton’ for the book and ‘the late James Simpson, Esq.’ for the introduction.⁵⁴ It is evident from my other sources that by this time it was normal practice for authors to advertise their names and credentials, which may have been one reason the publishers decided to finally credit the authors. Perhaps more importantly, by the 1890s *Vegetarian Cookery* had become a classic, and the inclusion of the names of two venerable giants of vegetarian history (neither of whom was around to object to being outed) would only have helped sell more copies.

Although its roots stretched back to the Protestant sects of the early nineteenth century, the cause of vegetarianism was also taken up by newer religious movements, sometimes with a lighter hand. *Practical Vegetarian Cookery*, for instance, intentionally avoids trying to be an ‘exhaustive treatise’ like other religiously-motivated vegetarian cookbooks. Instead, editors Kate Buffington Davis and Countess Constance Wachtmeister introduce their 1897 book as ‘a clear and

⁵¹ Martha Brotherton, *Vegetarian Cookery* (London: Fred Pitman; Manchester: William Bremner, 1852), <http://archive.org/details/b21530968>.

⁵² Spencer, *Vegetarianism*, 246.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 344.

⁵⁴ Martha Brotherton, *Vegetarian Cookery* (London: Fred Pitman, 1891), <http://archive.org/details/b21531614>.

practical aid in the better preparations of some of the delicious products of the Vegetable Kingdom'.⁵⁵ Their introduction on 'Vegetarianism from a Theosophical standpoint' skims through a dizzying range of concepts, including 'Unity of life', 'Karma', 'occult science', 'astral bodies', and a 'diet free from blood'.⁵⁶ However, in contrast to the dense introductions of other religiously motivated cookbooks, this philosophical sketch occupies scarcely over a page before giving way to recipes.

For other authors, the case for favouring vegetables over meat could be made on moral grounds that depended not on a specific religion, but a more general set of socially progressive principles. M.R.L. Sharpe's 1908 *Golden Age Cook Book* is not overtly religious, but instead advocates a vegetable-based diet as an antidote to the many instances of animal cruelty she describes in her introduction.⁵⁷ Sharpe founded an upper-class vegetarian society in Chicago, the Millenium Guild. Her interest in vegetarianism had begun during a conversation with the Buddhist leader Anagarika Dharmapala during the 1893 International Vegetarian Congress. Sharpe became personally acquainted with several famous vegetarian advocates, including Count Leo Tolstoy, Frau Cosima Wagner (wife of composer Richard Wagner), and playwright George Bernard Shaw, all of whom she name-drops in her introduction.⁵⁸ Her commitment to what she and others called a 'bloodless diet' was chiefly rooted in animal welfare. However, she also connected it to the plight of those who worked under inhumane conditions in the meat industry, deploring the thought that 'even one child should be standing almost knee-deep in blood in some slaughter-house' to supply her with food.⁵⁹ Sharpe and other contemporary activists wished to inspire others to ascend to what they saw as a higher moral plane, and for them, the obvious first step lay in a diet that excluded violence in all its forms.

Most cookbook authors may have been female, but some men also entered the fray, drawing on professional titles or connections within the movement to bolster their credibility in an area of writing that was generally considered the realm of women. Still, they tended to de-emphasise their own participation in the act of

⁵⁵ Constance Wachtmeister and Kate Buffington Davis, *Practical Vegetarian Cookery* (San Francisco : Mercury, 1897), <http://archive.org/details/b20402405>, 1.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁵⁷ Her expansive vision of non-cruelty extended even to the prohibition of sticky fly paper, a device she described as 'one of the most fiendish'. M. R. L. Sharpe, *The Golden Rule Cook Book* (Cambridge, U.S.A.: Cambridge : University Press, 1908), <http://archive.org/details/b21539686>, 15-16.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 176. The connections between the vegetarian views of some of these figures and their advocacy of racist policies will be explored in Chapter 3.

⁵⁹ Sharpe, *Golden Rule*, 22.

cookery. Black, for instance, defers to the traditional gendered narrative, frankly acknowledging that he owes most of the content in his 1908 *Manual of Vegetarian Cookery* to the ‘Manageress’ of a vegetarian establishment he owned, a ‘Miss Isabel Densham’, who ‘displayed an unusual aptitude for cooking’.⁶⁰ Likewise, Sidney Hartnoll Beard informs readers of his 1902 *Comprehensive Guide-Book to Natural, Hygienic & Humane Diet* that many of his recipes come from ‘members of the Order of the Golden Age’ (the magazine of which he is the editor) and ‘other workers in the Food-Reform Cause’.⁶¹ Despite the many cooks in his kitchen, Beard seems none too confident about how much his readers will enjoy the recipes. He qualifies his offerings with the cagey proviso that ‘if certain recipes do not commend themselves to some of my readers they must remember that human palates differ considerably, and must try other dishes which they may like better’. Black also introduces his recipes with a set of exculpatory gustatory caveats, as well as a resentful diatribe against the highly spiced and seasoned dishes ‘erroneously called “High-Class” Vegetarian Cookery’.⁶² Miles, the author of *Unproprietary Foods*, warns his readers (rather alarmingly) that ‘scarcely one in a hundred’ new vegetarians manages the transition ‘without some unpleasant experiments’.⁶³ In other words, despite a multiplicity of original arguments for basing one’s diet in plants rather than animals, at least for some (particularly male) authors, the moral and nutritional virtues of the vegetarian diet outweighed any trivial desire that a dish be tasty or even palatable. Learning to subsist on vegetable-based food lay at the very foundation of building a moral life, and was worth any inconvenience or bland dinner that might ensue along the way.

The Pleasures of Eating Vegetables

Although ideological vegetarians and their alignment with progressive causes may have grabbed the lion’s share of the public consciousness of vegetarianism, superior morality was not the only reason to eat vegetables. Some cookbook authors

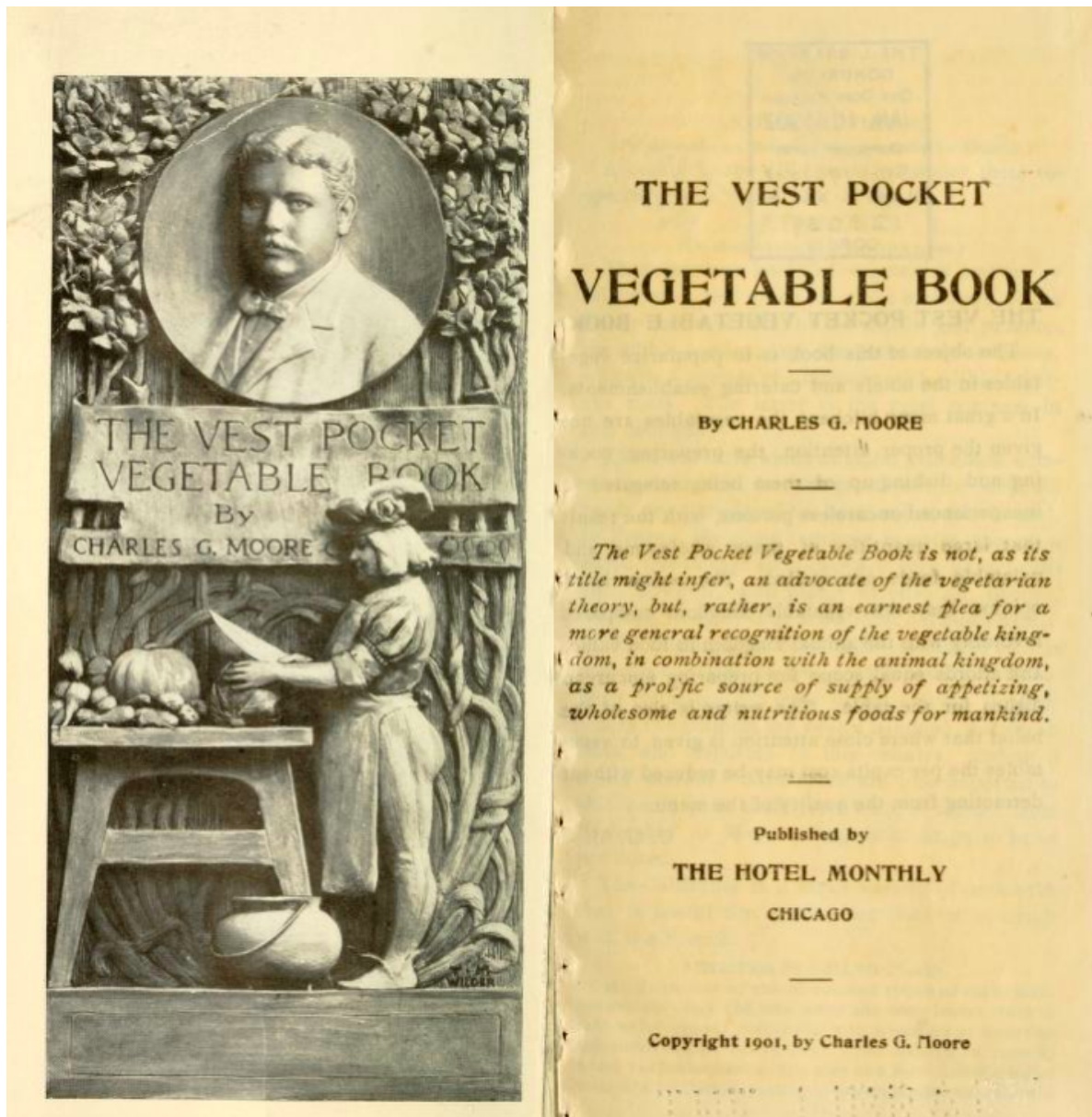
⁶⁰ George Black, *A Manual of Vegetarian Cookery* (London: Horace Marshall, 1908), <http://archive.org/details/amanualvegetari00blacgoog>, preface. His own contribution to the cookbook is limited to ‘the arrangement of it and the mode of presentation’. To justify his authority for writing such a book, he invokes instead his extensive experience *eating* vegetarian cookery.

⁶¹ Sidney Hartnoll Beard, *A Comprehensive Guide-Book to Natural, Hygienic & Humane Diet* (Crowell, 1902), <http://archive.org/details/acomprehensiveveg01beargoog>. ix.

⁶² Black, *Manual of Vegetarian*, preface.

⁶³ Miles, *Unproprietary Foods*, 8.

had a much simpler reason for lauding plant foods: they were tasty, or at least could be made so, given the proper preparation techniques. In fact, vegetables could easily be served at the finest hotels, or by the most fashionable ladies, if they were artfully prepared. And knowing the correct accompanying greens or adorning meat-based dishes with an aesthetic vegetable garnish could elevate a dinner party (and therefore the status of the hostess) from merely good to sublime.



Title page and frontispiece of Charles G. Moore's *The Vest Pocket Vegetable Book*⁶⁴

⁶⁴ Charles G. Moore, *The Vest Pocket Vegetable Book* (Chicago: The Hotel Monthly, 1901), <http://archive.org/details/vestpocketvegeta00moor>, title page. The engraving appears to depict a (male) cook, perhaps during the Renaissance, to judge by the style of dress.

However, instruction was needed, particularly since advances in cultivation, preservation and transportation were making ever more exotic fruits and vegetables newly available, at least for those who could afford them.⁶⁵ By the turn of the century, the vegetarian cause had become sufficiently well-known that in the absence of a declaration to the contrary, a cookbook author writing on vegetables might be assumed a proponent of vegetarianism. For example, *The Vest Pocket Vegetable Book*—published in 1901 by *The Hotel Monthly*, and presumably intended for an audience of professional hotel chefs—explains on its title page that it ‘is not, as its title might infer, an advocate of the vegetarian theory’.⁶⁶ Rather, this cookbook styles itself ‘an earnest plea for a more general recognition of the vegetable kingdom . . . as a prolific source of supply of appetizing, wholesome and nutritious foods for mankind’.⁶⁷ The tone of this guide for chefs suggests that vegetables might have been rather on the defensive at the time, although one would not know it from Thomas Jefferson Murrey’s introduction to his slim 1886 volume *Fifty Salads*. He proclaims the salad ‘the Prince of the Menu’, cautioning that ‘although a dinner be perfect in every other detail except the salad, the affair will be voted a failure if that be poor’.⁶⁸ With nary a mention of moral imperatives, Murrey lauds the gustatory perfection of his largely vegetable-based salads. In its short 32 pages this text refers to the various dishes it describes using many variations on delightful, pleasing, delicious, palatable, excellent, perfect, best and ‘not to be despised’.

The late nineteenth century brought an increase of upper class interest in vegetarianism, which had previously been associated largely with fringe movements and plain living.⁶⁹ Cowen, one of the authors of *Fast Day and Vegetarian Cookery*, establishes her elevated credentials by listing herself on the title page as ‘Epicure, late of “The Gentlewoman”’.⁷⁰ Unsurprisingly, given this introduction to the author, the writing is graceful and erudite, if loquacious. Consciously placing itself in the culinary

⁶⁵ A caterer or hostess would need to know, for instance, that hot-house celery should be served in specialised cut-glass ‘celery vases’ to accentuate its extravagant appeal. Veit, *Gilded Age*, 8.

⁶⁶ Charles G. Moore, *The Vest Pocket Vegetable Book* (Chicago: The Hotel Monthly, 1901), <http://archive.org/details/vestpocketvegeta00moor>, title page.

⁶⁷ Moore, *Vest Pocket*, title page.

⁶⁸ Thomas J. (Thomas Jefferson) Murrey, *Fifty Salads* (New York: White, Stokes, & Allen, 1886), <http://archive.org/details/fiftysalads00murr>, 7.

⁶⁹ Shprintzen, *Vegetarian Crusade*, 152.

⁷⁰ Cowen and Beaty-Pownall, *Meals without Meat*, Title page. *The Gentlewoman* billed itself ‘An illustrated weekly journal for gentlewomen’. It was published between 1890 and 1915. The newspaper was lavishly illustrated, had ‘many ties to the Court’, and was intended for upper class women. (See: <https://blog.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/2020/09/07/new-titles-7-sept-2020/>, accessed May 2, 2021.)

tradition of well-regarded professional cookbooks written by men, including 'Francatelli, Gouffe, Ude, Urbain-Dubois, and indeed any of the old classics', this cookbook presents itself as filling a hitherto unmet need for a 'special manual for dainty cookery for Fast-day and Vegetarian purposes'.⁷¹ In contrast to authors like Beard and Black, for whom the enjoyment of a dish was secondary at best, Cowen and Beaty-Pownall assert throughout that no sacrifices of taste or beloved dishes need be made when adhering to vegetarian or fast-day strictures. 'Even the fashionable consommé', they assure their readers, 'need not be given up', for they promise to provide full directions for making stock from both fish and vegetables.⁷² Other recipes include such rarefied dainties as 'Mushrooms cooked under glass' or Céléri à la Duchesse.⁷³ For a lady of society embarking on the difficult task of modifying the household's consumptions to exclude meat-based dishes, such a guide would have been invaluable. Not only would it save her from the embarrassment of failing to provide expected dainties when entertaining; it might even allow her to turn the adopted diet into an asset, showcasing her ingenuity and moral superiority together in one triumphant dinner party.

In some cases, this focus on the gustatory took the form of an active counterpart to a perceived lack of focus on flavour in other, more dogmatic vegetarian cookbooks. Sarah Tyson Rorer, a culinary giant of the time, proclaims in her 1902 introduction to *Mrs. Rorer's vegetable cookery and meat substitutes*: 'Over-eating of meat has had its day and has left us as a reminder much sickness and sorrow.'⁷⁴ However, she decries other vegetarian cookbooks containing 'unhygienic, indigestible, tasteless and unattractive dishes', citing this deplorable state of affairs as the reason she has decided to bring her own formidable culinary chops to bear in remedying the situation. By the time she wrote this book, Rorer had already published over a dozen cookbooks, including one on a similar topic, *How to Cook Vegetables*, a decade earlier.⁷⁵ The fact that one of the most influential figures

⁷¹ Cowen and Beaty-Pownall, *Meals without Meat*, iii.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 2.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 117, 112.

⁷⁴ Sarah Tyson Rorer, *Mrs. Rorer's Vegetable Cookery and Meat Substitutes: Vegetables with Meat Value, Vegetables to Take the Place of Meat, How to Cook Three Meals a Day without Meat, the Best Ways of Blending Eggs, Milk and Vegetables* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1902), <http://archive.org/details/b21537574>, 3. Much more of Rorer and her significant contributions to the cookery culture of the turn of the twentieth century will follow in Chapters 2 and 3.

⁷⁵ Sarah Tyson Rorer, *How to Cook Vegetables* (Philadelphia: A. Burpee & co., 1891), <http://archive.org/details/howtocookvegetab00rore>.

in American home economics saw fit to publish a second vegetable-focused cookbook specifically addressing this segment indicates that she and her publisher saw potential in the growing vegetarian market. More than simply appealing to converted vegetarians, however, Rorer proclaimed her cookbook ‘universally needed’, promising to provide all readers with her trusted professional take on ‘the best meat substitutes and their artistic and hygienic accompaniments’.⁷⁶ Rorer’s authoritative voice made the vegetarian trend accessible not only for society ladies, but also the upwardly-mobile middle class striving to achieve new heights of vegetable perfection with more limited resources. By putting her stamp of approval on the project of substituting vegetables for meat, she also reinforced the legitimacy of vegetarianism and marked its influence within wider society. This endorsement by one of the most trusted home economics educators of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries proved that one no longer needed to espouse a radical fringe movement to take vegetables seriously, cook them well, and use them in place of meat, all without sacrificing taste or appeal.

Food (and Females) as Fine Art

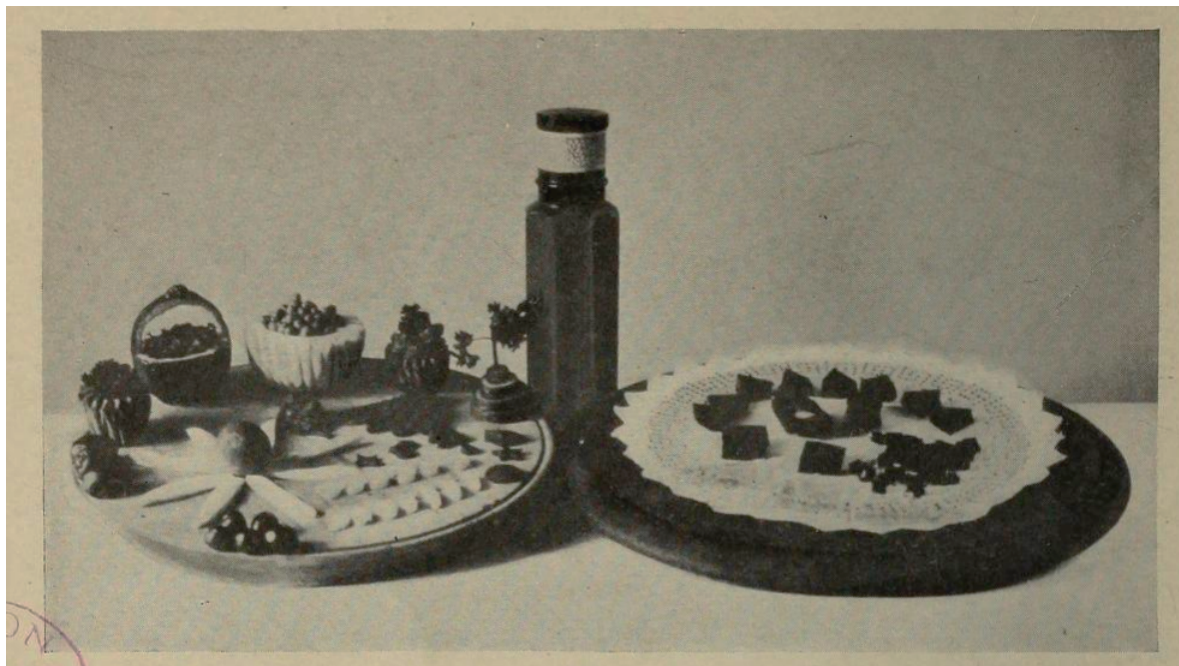
It is not strange that the incomparable Mrs. Rorer placed ‘tasteless and unattractive’ in such close proximity in her scathing dismissal of the vegetarian cookbooks of her day. Closely related to the gustatory is the aesthetic. The sensory aspects of food intertwine, such that a beautiful presentation is an important prelude to the taste of a dish—a view that was on display in abundance during this time. Shisko goes so far as to argue that ‘food’s status as observable image’ constituted ‘the general culinary sensibility in the last decade of the nineteenth century’.⁷⁷ Even the simplest dish—according to Mary Ronald, who celebrated the turn of the century with the publication of an almost 800-page tome, *The Century Cookbook*—was ‘capable of being raised to a higher rank by careful dishing and tasteful garnishing’.⁷⁸ She makes this assertion in a shorter supplemental volume: *Luncheons: a cook’s picture book*, which unlike most cookbooks of the time, is liberally illustrated with black and white photographs. A page early in the book includes (in a single

⁷⁶ Rorer, *Meat Substitutes*, 3.

⁷⁷ Shishko, ‘Epistemologies’, 153.

⁷⁸ Ronald, *Luncheons*, 8.

photograph) fourteen garnishes for meats, almost all composed of vegetables; a representative example is 'a turnip cut into cup shape with fluted knife and filled with green peas'.⁷⁹ This usage of vegetables to make meat look more palatable is no accident. Ronald sums up the rationale for her garnishing methodology by explaining, 'Meats require all the aids of skilful handling and tasteful adornment. Vegetables, on the contrary, have great beauty in themselves, and the art of the cook cannot rival that of nature.'⁸⁰



Vegetable garnishes from *Luncheons: a cook's picture book*. The turnip cup with peas is top centre on the left plate.⁸¹

Other authors felt that the beauty of vegetables could indeed be enhanced—by the hands of the cook who prepared them. After detailing how to obtain a 'pretty effect' in arranging a salad, Murrey brings the salad arranger herself into the tableaux, describing how 'In ancient times the fairest and youngest lady at table was expected to prepare and mix the salad with her fingers.'⁸² Unsurprisingly, this objectifying idealisation of a sanitised simplification of food preparation prettily performed under the male gaze appeared in a cookbook written by a man. However,

⁷⁹ Ronald, *Luncheons*, 16.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 18.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 16.

⁸² Murrey, *Fifty Salads*, 16.

the practice he describes seems to have been part of the cultural ethos of the time. It also appears in a verse by Milton, chosen as the opening epigram for *Gardening à la mode: Vegetables*, a combined cookbook and gardening manual: 'With herbs and suchlike/Country messes/Which the neat-handed/Phyllis dresses'.⁸³

Exemplifying this notion of the feminine and its connection to food preparation was a paragraph from John Ruskin's 1866 *The Ethics of the Dust: Ten Lectures to Little Housewives*:

Cookery means the knowledge of Medea, and of Circe, and of Calypso, and of Helen, and of Rebekah, and of the Queen of Sheba. It means the knowledge of all herbs, and fruits, and balms, and spices; and of all that is healing and sweet in the fields and groves, and savory in meats; it means carefulness, and inventiveness, and watchfulness, and willingness, and readiness of appliances. It means the economy of your great-grandmothers, and the science of the modern chemist; it means much tasting and no wasting; it means English thoroughness and French art and Arabian hospitality; and, in fine, it means that you are to be perfectly and always 'ladies';—'loaf givers'.⁸⁴

This passage was quoted repeatedly between the 1860s and 1920s, not only in cookbooks and domestic science manuals,⁸⁵ but also in publications as varied as *The American Phrenological Journal*, *The Boston Journal of Chemistry*, *Pacific Educational Journal*, annual reports from the Illinois Farmers' Institute and the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, and even a 1915 *History of Northwest Missouri*.⁸⁶ It is certainly not obvious why Ruskin begins his dictum on cookery for

⁸³ Mrs (Harriet Anne) De Salis, *Gardening à La Mode--Vegetables* (London, New York: Longmans, Green, 1895), <http://archive.org/details/gardeninglamod00desa>, title page.

⁸⁴ John Ruskin, *The Ethics of the Dust: Ten Lectures to Little Housewives* (London: Smith, Elder, & co., 1866), <http://archive.org/details/ethicsofdus00rusk>, 137-138.

⁸⁵ Henrietta L. Sawtelle, *What One Can Do with a Chafing Dish: A Guide for Amateur Cooks* (New York: J. Ireland, 1890), 7; Mary Johnson Lincoln, *Carving and Serving* (Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1886), 54; Adelaide Hoodless, *Public School Domestic Science* (Toronto: Copp, Clark Company, 1898), iv; Grace Church (Memphis, Tenn.) Guild of the Holy, *The Housekeeper's Friend: A Collection of Tested Recipes for the Preparation of Daily and Occasional Dishes* (Memphis: Pilcher Print. Company, 1905), 8; J. Fred Waggoner, *The New Home Cook Book* (Chicago: A.C. McClurg & Company, 1911), 372.

⁸⁶ S. R. Wells, ed., *The American Phrenological Journal and Life Illustrated: A Repository of Science, Literature, and General Intelligence*, vol. 49 (New York: Samuel R. Wells, 1869), 228; James R. Nichols, M.D., ed., *The Boston Journal of Chemistry and Popular Science Review* (Boston: Journal of Chemistry Company, 1881), 21; Department of Public Instruction of California, *Pacific Educational Journal*, ed. P. M. Fisher (Oakland: Department of Public Instruction of California, 1895), 257; Illinois Farmers' Institute, *Annual Report* (Springfield, Ill.: Phillips Bros., State Printers, 1900), 366;

‘little housewives’ with the classical sorceresses Medea and Circe, both of whom have an extraordinary relationship to cooking. Perversely, considering his original audience, Medea instructed two trusting girls to kill their father and stew his body in ‘water and a few simple herbs’, promising it would restore him to youth; and then fled before her deception could be discovered.⁸⁷ In Circe’s hands, the plants and herbs themselves became the weapons. Not only did she use them to transform a romantic rival into the dreaded monster Scylla; she habitually served delicious food adulterated with a potion that turned men into pigs.⁸⁸ The two are hardly paragons of Victorian female virtue, nor auspicious models for an aspiring cook.⁸⁹ Nevertheless, despite what subversive feminist notes a modern reader might detect in it, Ruskin’s eccentric explication of cookery resonated with turn-of-the-century authors. It reinforced a deep, almost mystical identification of women with cookery, and especially with everything touching the realm of edible plants. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, it seems, ‘knowledge of herbs and fruits and balms and spices, and all that is healing and sweet in the fields and groves’ was a significant component of what it meant to be ‘perfectly and always ladies’.⁹⁰

In some cases, aestheticism permeated the process of food preparation in a more egalitarian fashion, providing a pleasing experience not only for diners, but also for the cook. Historically, there had been a hotly contested division between books of practical cookery, intended for those who did the cooking, and the erudite ‘gastronomic literature’, a subset of *belles lettres* designed to delight the epicures who did the eating.⁹¹ Notaker blurs the boundary by bringing in Phillippe Gillet, a sociologist who contends that cookbooks should be considered ‘the real gastronomic literature’, considering how often they are ‘read and appreciated as gourmandise in

Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, *Annual Report of the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture* (Harrisburg, PA: Harrisburg Publishing Co., State Printers, 1905), 155; Walter Williams, *A History of Northwest Missouri* (Chicago, New York: Lewis publishing Company, 1915), 152.

⁸⁷ Thomas Bulfinch, *The Age Of Fable Or Beauties Of Mythology* (Boston: S. W. Tilton & Co., 1855), <http://archive.org/details/in.ernet.dli.2015.180151>, 165-166.

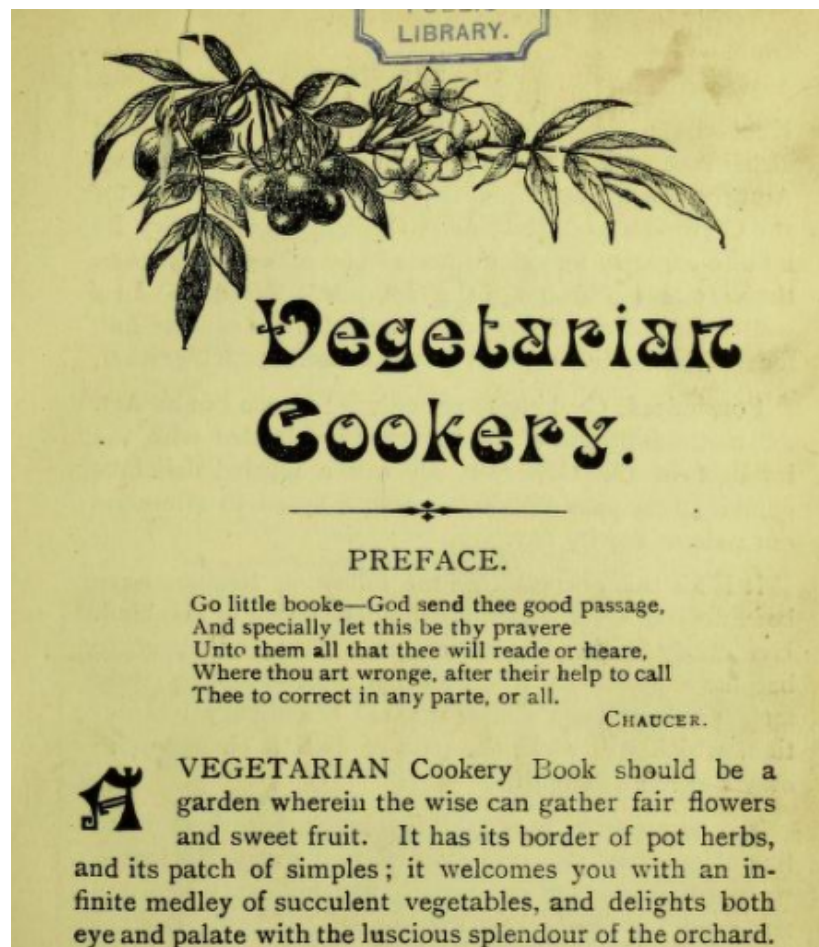
⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 73, 295-296.

⁸⁹ Nor would the references have passed unnoticed; these notorious women would have been well known even to small girls—or indeed the public at large—who were not reading Ovid and Homer in the original Greek. I quote above from Thomas Bulfinch’s immensely popular *Age of Fable*, a collection of classical myths retold for children, first published in 1855 and reprinted many times throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

⁹⁰ It is clear from Ruskin’s words that the performative dressing of salads in front of company was only the tip of the iceberg; the female mystery of cookery entailed a great deal of preparation and work behind the scenes. Therefore, much more will be said of ‘the economy of your great-grandmothers’, and ‘the science of the modern chemist’ in Chapters 2 and 3, respectively.

⁹¹ Notaker, *History of Cookbooks*, 172.

themselves because they fuel the readers' dreams more than they help them manage a kitchen'.⁹²



First page of Arnold Hills' preface for Florence I. Nicholson's *The Jubilee Cookery Book*⁹³

Of course, the twin aims of fuelling dreams and helping manage a kitchen are by no means mutually exclusive, as one can gather from the lively, interesting and often mouth-watering prose interspersed with recipes in my corpus of cookbooks. Hills, in his flowery preface to *The Jubilee Cookery Book*, describes the included dishes as a 'revelation of gustatory perfection'.⁹⁴ However, he goes further, imagining the cookbook itself as an aesthetic object: 'a garden wherein the wise can gather fair flowers and sweet fruit. . . . It welcomes you with the infinite medley of succulent vegetables, and delights both eye and palate.'⁹⁵ The material form of the book in

⁹² Notaker, *History of Cookbooks*, 173.

⁹³ Nicholson, *Jubilee*, 3.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁹⁵ Nicholson, *Jubilee*, 3.

question, a simple pamphlet priced prominently on its cover at twopence, does not seem to be what he had in mind, but rather the recipes themselves, which in his metaphor become almost interchangeable with the vegetable preparations they describe. This emphasis on the recipe as part of the overall experience brings to mind Notaker's evocation of the symbolic and experiential importance of the name of a dish on a menu. He quotes a French gourmet who suggests that simply reading a menu could 'bring ecstasy and transport the true gastronome to the promised paradise'.⁹⁶ Hills' imagined readers—who, unlike the diner at a restaurant, would be preparing their own meals—could already achieve a portion of the delight of eating them simply by reading the recipe.

From Genesis to Dumas

As well as emphasising their pleasing aesthetic qualities, many cookbook authors utilised literary sources to extol the virtues of vegetables. These ranged from the classical to the Biblical to the contemporary. For centuries, title pages had been an important way of establishing the authority and credentials of the author of a cookbook, so they were a logical place to include other forms of authority as well.⁹⁷ Along with an author's previous books, relevant professional positions and degrees, a thematic epigram sometimes appeared. Bible verses were popular. Brotherton's famous *Vegetarian Cookery* opens with Genesis 1:29: 'And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat.'⁹⁸ This oft-repeated verse from the first chapter of the Bible, granting man the divine gift of 'every herb bearing seed' would become a standard means of promoting vegetable-based diets. Dwight commences with an entire page of Biblical quotations on the virtues of eating plants, beginning with Genesis, and then moving on to Exodus, Ecclesiastes, Isaiah and Daniel.⁹⁹ Literary openers lent perhaps less gravity, but more ornamentation and a suggestion of erudition or elevated social class. Byron and Whittier appear, along with Milton and the ubiquitous Ruskin. From Shakespeare we have 'The earth hath roots;/ The bounteous buswife Nature on each bush/ Lays

⁹⁶ Notaker, *History of Cookbooks*, 107.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 40

⁹⁸ Brotherton, *Vegetarian Cookery*, 1891, title page.

⁹⁹ Dwight, *Golden Age*, 4.

her full mess before ye' and 'May good digestion wait on appetite, and health on both'.¹⁰⁰

For cooks reluctant to incorporate more or unfamiliar vegetables into their repertoire, cookbook authors offered the wisdom of ancient times as an inducement for trying something new. Murrey describes how beet leaves can be served 'the same as lettuce', adding persuasively that in fact 'the seed-leaves of the beet were preferred by the Greeks to lettuce'.¹⁰¹ In the preface to yet another vegetable-themed cookbook, this one featuring exclusively salads, Rorer assures readers that 'lettuce and cress have, from the earliest times, occupied a most prominent place', and then goes on to narrate which sorts of salad greens were preferred by the Hebrews, Greeks and Romans respectively.¹⁰² In perhaps the most extreme case, halfway through a lengthy and passionate introduction setting out the case for a 'non-flesh-eating' diet, Sharpe goes all out with the name-dropping, envisioning a 'goodly company' of vegetarian 'guests at Ceres' table', including Adam, Hesiod, Gautama, Plato, Zoroaster, Pope, Leonardo da Vinci, Voltaire, Shelley, King Oscar II, and a dozen more.¹⁰³

Nor were these literary allusions confined to prefaces and introductions. Many found their way into recipes, functioning both as a device for adding colour and charm, and also perhaps an encouragement to take up the book at times of leisure as well as cooking. In a short history of onions preceding the relevant recipes, Harry Roberts flits through pungent references from Ruskin, Shakespeare, Exodus, Juvenal, Chaucer and more, before finally proceeding to how the vegetable in question can be stewed, baked or simmered together with cheese.¹⁰⁴ In like manner, Cowen and Beaty-Pownall evoke that 'awful mixture celebrated by Dickens' as 'a common form in which salad was understood in our benighted island', before proceeding to their own enlightened views on salads.¹⁰⁵ Murrey turns to celebrated

¹⁰⁰ Mrs (Harriet Anne) De Salis, *Dressed Vegetables à La Mode* (London, New York and Bombay: Longmans, Green, 1900), <http://archive.org/details/b21524506>, title page; Nichols, *Penny Vegetarian*, 1891, 4; Hartford National Fire Insurance Company and Springfield Fire and Marine Insurance Company, *Choice Recipes Compiled by Practical Housekeepers of Sonoma County, California* (San Francisco: Whitaker & Ray Co., 1900), <http://archive.org/details/choicerecipescom00natiiala>, 3.

¹⁰¹ Murrey, *Fifty Salads*, 12.

¹⁰² Sarah Tyson Rorer, *New Salads for Dinners, Luncheons, Suppers and Receptions: With a Group of Odd Salads and Some Ceylon Salads* (Philadelphia: Arnold and Co., 1897), http://archive.org/details/newsaladsfordinn00rore_0, 5.

¹⁰³ Sharpe, *Golden Rule*, 17.

¹⁰⁴ George Wythes and Harry Roberts, *The Book of Vegetables* (London and New York: J. Lane, 1902), <http://archive.org/details/cu31924003320979>, 85-87.

¹⁰⁵ Cowen and Beaty-Pownall, *Meals without Meat*, 135.

French novelist Alexandre Dumas, attributing one of his salads to the famous author and putting the entire recipe in quotation marks.¹⁰⁶ In this case, the author in question was also a noted gastronome; Dumas's *Grand dictionnaire de cuisine* had been posthumously published a mere decade before Murrey quoted him, and was considered a fine example of the literary genre of gastronomic writing.¹⁰⁷ In an echo of the male/female divide between the lofty philosophical introductions and practical recipes of the vegetarian movement, cookbook authors were aware of the gulf between books of practical cookery (often written by women) and literary epicureanism (almost exclusively the domain of men).¹⁰⁸ This tension between the literary and the purely practical is one that plays out in several of the cookbooks published in this period, which sought to straddle the chasm. Particularly for upper class or more educated readers—or those striving to appear so—connecting a specific vegetable concoction with a notable literary work or figure could make the dish more enticing and also perhaps provide inspiration for dinner conversation while it was consumed.

The Age of Edible Empire

An interesting counterpart to the historical references in cookbooks from the turn of the twentieth century are allusions or borrowings from the cuisines of other lands, which evoke a whole constellation of complex cultural and culinary relationships. Eating the empire was one more way to demonstrate cultural dominance, along with cosmopolitan worldliness and polish. Some of the most prominent threads are the inclusion of exoticised recipes from colonial possessions, particularly India. These 'Anglo-Indian' cookbooks appear to be targeted at the British ruling elite, returned to England from the Raj and missing their colonial homes, or the untraveled middle class, intrigued by the lure of the exotic. Plant-based dishes feature more prominently than in other Anglophone cookbooks, thanks to the rich tradition of Indian vegetarian cooking. One example is Edward Palmer Veerasawmy's *Indian Cookery*, published in 1915, eleven years before he founded

¹⁰⁶ Murrey, *Fifty Salads*, 20.

¹⁰⁷ Notaker, *History of Cookbooks*, 88, 179.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 180-183.

what is generally acknowledged to be London's first Indian restaurant.¹⁰⁹ Although it also contained many meat dishes, the book featured vegetables prepared in ways wholly foreign to what vegetarian cookbooks of the time often referred to dismissively as 'the purely English one of plain boiling them'.¹¹⁰ In contrast to the usual single chapter on vegetables, Veerasawmy's book offered a cornucopia of new pleasures, including vegetarian rice dishes, Egg Curry with Green Peas, an entire section on legumes, and multiple vegetable-based chapters full of unfamiliar names like Foogath, Boortha, and Kitcheree.¹¹¹

BEHNDI OR LADY'S FINGERS FOOGATH

Use the canned Behndis and drain thoroughly.

1 onion	}	sliced finely.
2 cloves of garlic		
6 thin slices of fresh or pickled green ginger	}	minced finely
2 or 3 fresh or pickled chillies		

½ teaspoonful of ground chillies.

Fry lightly in 2 ozs. of ghee or other fat for 3 or 4 minutes all the above ingredients except the Behndis. Then add 2 tablespoonsful of finely scraped fresh cocoanut or 1 dessertspoonful of desiccated cocoanut. Add the Behndis and salt to taste and simmer gently until they are warmed through.

The addition of 2 or 3 finely sliced tomatoes cooked with the other ingredients before the Behndis are added is an improvement.

A recipe for Foogath (a coconut-based vegetable dish) made with Behndi (okra) from Edward Palmer Veerasawmy's *Indian Cookery*.¹¹²

In a layered romanticisation of colonial nostalgia, Veerasawmy, a British army officer of mixed race whose surname was adopted from that of his Indian maternal grandmother, began the book with the famous Scott quotation from the Lay of the

¹⁰⁹ A transposition error in his last name led to the enduring name of the restaurant, Veerasawmy. 'Veerasawmy', *The Evening Standard*, 10 April 2012, sec. The Reveller, <https://www.standard.co.uk/reveller/restaurants/veerasawmy-7431082.html>; Gayatri Manu, 'The Impressive History of the Oldest Indian Restaurant in London That Just Received a Michelin Star', *The Better India*, 19 October 2016, <https://www.thebetterindia.com/72231/veerasawmy-london-restaurant-michelin-star/>.

¹¹⁰ Cowen and Beaty-Pownell, *Meals without Meat*, 107.

¹¹¹ E. P. Veerasawmy, *Indian Cookery* (London: Arco Publishers Limited, 1915), <http://archive.org/details/in.ernet.dli.2015.150459>, 31, 131, 137, 141, 149.

¹¹² Ibid., 139.

Last Minstrel: 'Breathes there the man with soul so dead/who never to himself hath said,/This is my own, my native land.'¹¹³

Veerasawmy was not the only one who made a name for himself promoting Indian cooking in England. Johnson, whom we encountered earlier in *Fast Day Cookery, or Meals without Meat* opens her preface by referring to 'the kindly manner in which the Press has dealt with my "Anglo-Indian and Oriental Cookery"' as impetus for writing this second cookbook on vegetarian dishes. Being an expert at Eastern cookery did not carry privileged class connotations; it was, after all, the food of the colonised. Appealing to the same middle-class readers who had enjoyed her first offering, in *Fast Day Cookery* Johnson denies any pretence at offering a 'high-class cookery book', promising instead to make fast-day cookery available to 'most people'.¹¹⁴ Her original foray into Anglo-Indian food also informed her approach to vegetables. This book includes Indian-inspired dishes such as Mulligatawny, Plain Dhàl, and even Curried Macaroni.¹¹⁵ The idea that inspiration for cooking vegetables could come from other cultures was one theme of the 1893 International Vegetarian Congress which included Hindus from India in its line-up of lecturers on the virtues of vegetarianism.¹¹⁶ Curries or other dishes associated with India turn up in many vegetable cookbooks of the period. Still, due to the lingering influence of the original plain-living vegetarians, there was some disagreement over whether such spices should be part of a diet at all. While acknowledging their popularity, Beard disparages 'the hot, condimented and curried preparations that those who value their health will scrupulously avoid'.¹¹⁷ Sometimes, however, references to 'Indian' dishes had nothing to do with India. In *Dr. Nichols' Penny Vegetarian Cookery*, a recipe for 'Indian Apple Pudding' turns out to be a relatively bland dish made with 'Indian meal', referred to elsewhere in the cookbook as Indian maize meal, and therefore an American import rather than an Indian one.¹¹⁸

In contrast to Indian cooking, which was adopted as a way to add spice and flavour to vegetables, French cuisine constituted a paragon of culinary authority.

¹¹³ Veerasawmy, *Indian Cookery*, preface.

¹¹⁴ Johnson, *Fast Day*, v.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 20, 55, 62.

¹¹⁶ Shprintzen, *Vegetarian Crusade*, 158.

¹¹⁷ Black, *Manual of Vegetarian*, Preface, page 2.

¹¹⁸ Thomas Low Nichols, *Dr. Nichols' Penny Vegetarian Cookery: The Science and the Art of Selecting and Preparing a Pure, Healthful, and Sufficient Diet Illustrated by Food Diagrams and Portraits of Distinguished Vegetarians* (London: Franks & Co., 1888), <http://archive.org/details/b30477396>, 27.

French hegemony in the kitchen had by then existed in Europe—and by extension the United States—for centuries, an element of the general French cultural primacy that had arisen in the seventeenth century.¹¹⁹ Although cookbooks of the time include a smattering of other international-sounding foods like Palestine Soup or Hungarian Eggs, French appellations are by far the most common foreign names for dishes. A preponderance of French names often served as a strategy for establishing that a cookbook was intended for a highbrow audience. For example, in contrast to Johnson's *Fast Day Cookery*, which is highly coloured by her expertise in the vegetable methodologies of the East, Cowen and Beaty-Pownell's *Fast Day and Vegetarian Cookery* takes a consciously French approach, reflecting and reinforcing the elevated socioeconomic status of their intended readers. Throwing in French phrases (often with a translation, for those who desired French culinary knowledge, but did not yet possess it) was a simple way to align one's cookbook with an aesthetic approach to food as fine art. For example, following Murrey's previously discussed description of a lady preparing salad with her fingers, he throws in the helpful titbit that "Retourner la salade les doigts," is the French way of describing a lady to be still young and beautiful'.¹²⁰

An interesting in-between space was occupied by Italian cooking, which was viewed neither through a completely colonial lens nor quite as an arbiter of epicurean taste. For cookbook authors in the United States, a reference point for Italians and their cuisine came largely from the poor southern Italians who flooded in during the 'new immigration' between 1880 and 1921.¹²¹ Their love of fresh vegetables, tomatoes and 'zesty spicing' were widely stereotyped in the American media, which viewed Italians as swarthy immigrants in teeming tenements.¹²² Soon spaghetti had made it onto many American menus, but in Levenstein's words, 'only as "Italienne," the French spelling bringing some reassurance that the original Italian dish had been civilized and purified in French hands'.¹²³

Here it is prudent to note that geographical names for food dishes are a bit of an etymological minefield, since as Notaker notes, these names were inevitably designated from the outside; it would be strange, for instance, if a French cookbook

¹¹⁹ Notaker, *History of Cookbooks*, 67-68.

¹²⁰ Murrey, *Fifty Salads*, 16-17.

¹²¹ Harvey Levenstein, 'The American Response to Italian Food, 1880-1930', in *Food in the USA : A Reader*, ed. Carole Counihan (London: Routledge, 2002), Part II, Chapter 7, 75.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 76-79.

¹²³ Levenstein, 'American Response', 77.

referred to a particular dish as 'à la française'.¹²⁴ Likewise, the designation 'l'Italienne', when applied to a vegetable dish, means only that someone somewhere at some point associated it with Italy. These associations could be vague; Murrey remarks that 'nearly all mixed vegetable salads that contain various ingredients may be safely called *à l'Italienne*, for all culinary odds and ends are made into salads by these thrifty people'.¹²⁵ In the process he reinforces the perception of Italians as both poor and resourceful. And indeed, the associated mix of raw vegetables served with 'plain salad dressing' bears only a passing resemblance to an identically named dish from *Cassell's Vegetarian Cookery* consisting of 'a great variety of boiled vegetables, which are placed in a mould and served in aspic jelly'.¹²⁶ However, the competing ideas of what Italian cooking meant extended much farther than a wide latitude in interpreting the meaning of a specific dish. Murrey leans towards a highbrow take on Italian cuisine when he adds to his description of Salad l'Italienne, 'it must not for an instant be supposed that the different items are thrown indifferently together. On the contrary, they study the all-important problem of how to first please the eye, so that their gastronomic effort may more easily please the palate'.¹²⁷ Here we have again the view of food as art, combined with the suggestion of a more elevated status for Italian cooking, and a way for the reader to appropriate this status for her own ends.

A case study for the liminal space Italian cookery occupied in the Anglophone mind is *Leaves from Our Tuscan Kitchen, or, How to Cook Vegetables*, first published in 1899.¹²⁸ The author, Janet Ross, was a scion of an upper-class British family characterised by generations of literary women. After a childhood spent rubbing shoulders with London's literary elite and an adventurous interlude as the young wife of a British banking officer in Egypt, she spent forty years as part of the centuries-old 'Florentine Colony', a community established in Tuscany by upper-class English expatriates.¹²⁹ While it was not a colony in the formal sense, the social

¹²⁴ Notaker, *History of Cookbooks*, 102.

¹²⁵ Murrey, *Fifty Salads*, 24.

¹²⁶ A. G. (Arthur Gay) Payne, *Cassell's Vegetarian Cookery: A Manual of Cheap and Wholesome Diet* (London: Cassell, 1905), <http://archive.org/details/b21528585>, 105. Payne goes on to point out that aspic jelly is not allowed in a vegetarian diet, recommending a mould held together by corn-flour instead (the same 'Indian meal' in Nichols's 'Indian Apple Pudding').

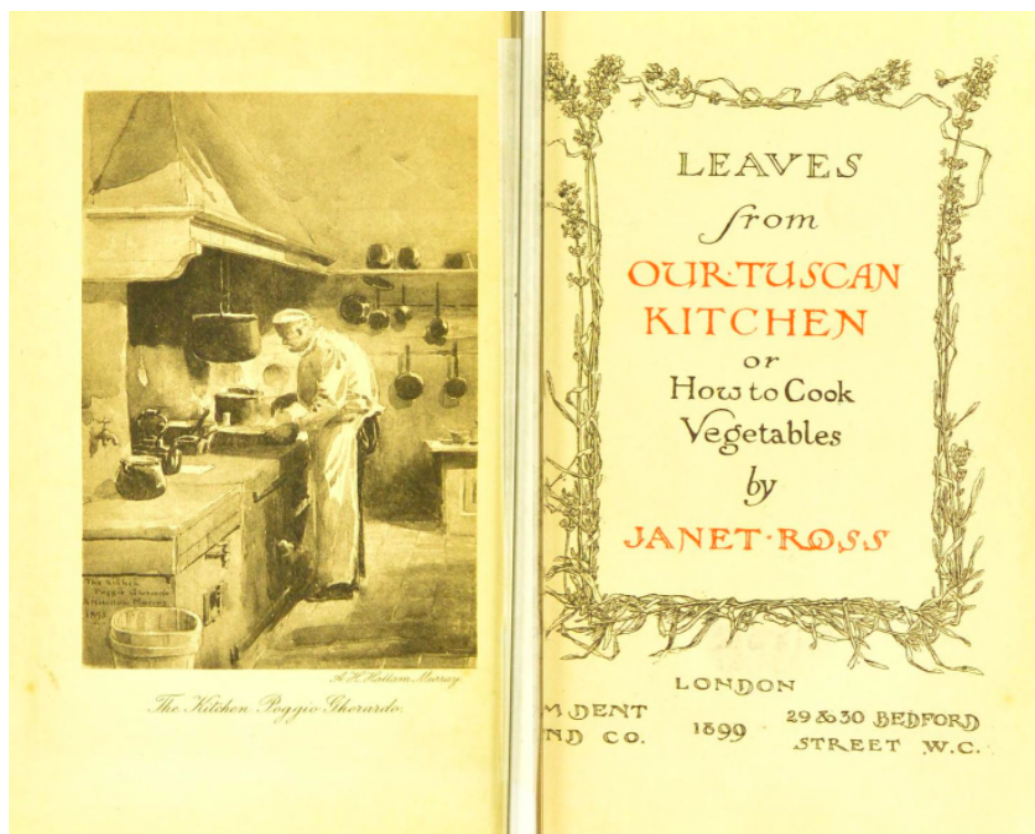
¹²⁷ Murrey, *Fifty Salads*, 24.

¹²⁸ Janet Ross, *Leaves from Our Tuscan Kitchen, or, How to Cook Vegetables* (London: J.M. Dent, 1899), <http://archive.org/details/b21527222>. The book was reprinted ten times up through the 1930s, and then 'rediscovered' and reissued in 1975 by a chef and great-great-nephew of Janet Ross, with a further reprinting in 1993. It remains in print today.

¹²⁹ Janet Ross, *The Fourth Generation; Reminiscences by Janet Ross*. 4th Impression (London: Constable and company Ltd., 1912), <http://archive.org/details/fourthgeneration00rossiala>, v.

life of the group functioned in much the same way as expatriate communities in Crown possessions abroad.¹³⁰ Like many others, Ross and her husband arrived in diminished financial straits, hoping to maintain in inexpensive Italy a lifestyle that would have been impossible for them in England.¹³¹ They eventually bought a castle in the Tuscan countryside, and ran it—as was then customary—with a staff of servants and Italian peasant tenants living under a sharecropping system.¹³²

Despite publishing a cookbook, Ross admits light-heartedly in her autobiography that she knew ‘nothing about cookery, never having even boiled an egg in my life’.¹³³ The recipes in the book are from her Italian cook, Giuseppe Volpi, whose portrait (aproned, in the castle kitchen) faces the book’s decorative frontispiece.



Title page of *Leaves from our Tuscan Kitchen* by Janet Ross, with a facing portrait of her cook, Giuseppe Volpi, entitled ‘The Kitchen Poggio Gherardo’¹³⁴

¹³⁰ Ben Downing, *Queen Bee of Tuscany: The Redoubtable Janet Ross* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2013), 102.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 99.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 165, 172.

¹³³ J. Ross, *Fourth Generation*, 369.

¹³⁴ J. Ross, *Leaves*, title page.

The cookbook is intended for her English friends—many had been guests in her castle in Tuscany and eaten at her table—whom she says have for years ‘begged recipes for cooking vegetables in the Italian fashion’.¹³⁵ While thus far the book seems to follow the mould of the Indian cookbooks intended for audiences at home in Britain, Ross begins it with a literary preface invoking Pliny, Pope and Boccaccio. She describes a series of fantastical dishes prepared for popes and kings, situating Italian cuisine in a position more analogous to the sophisticated French kitchen than the exoticised Indian one. And while many of the dishes would have been attainable by a cook even in relatively humble circumstances, the inclusion of a recipe like ‘Truffles in Champagne’ (at the head of an entire section on preparing truffles) points to the privilege of her intended audience.¹³⁶ Perhaps as a way to appeal to a wider range of socioeconomic classes, the 1908 fifth edition of the book—the first to be published in New York along with London—includes the addition of ‘some simpler recipes for cooking vegetables and a few for *maigre* [lean] soups’.¹³⁷

Ross credits ‘the dictation of our good Giuseppe Volpi’ in her preface, although she complains more candidly in her autobiography about her weariness at ‘putting Giuseppe’s rather discursive Italian into decent English’.¹³⁸ She also mentions having included recipes from an Italian cookbook, *Come si Cucinano i Legumi [How to Cook Vegetables]*.¹³⁹ One way Italian national consciousness expressed itself in these first decades after unification was through food, often emerging in the differentiation of Italian cuisine from that of other nations.¹⁴⁰ In Pellegrino Artusi’s influential *La Scienza In Cucina E L’Arte Di Mangiar Bene [Science in the Kitchen and the Art of Eating Well]*, published in Florence in 1891 and therefore likely also known to Ross, his introduction to a recipe for *Piselli con Prosciutto* (Peas with Bacon) expressed the Italian perception (and his own opinion) of English vegetable cooking. He declared: ‘*Lasciamo agl’ Inglesi il gusto di*

¹³⁵ J. Ross, *Leaves*, 1899, xii,

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 147.

¹³⁷ Janet Ross, *Leaves from Our Tuscan Kitchen, or, How to Cook Vegetables* (London & New York: J.M. Dent and Sons; E.P. Dutton & Co Inc., 1908), <http://archive.org/details/b21539133>, xiii. The reference to *maigre* soups is also likely meant to appeal to cooks in search of fast-day recipes. The term ‘maigre’ was used to refer to soups without egg or dairy products, since these traditional soup-thickeners were prohibited on fast days.

¹³⁸ J. Ross, *Leaves*, 1899, xii; Ross, *Fourth Generation*, 369.

¹³⁹ J. Ross, *Leaves*, 1899, vii.

¹⁴⁰ Cristiano Turbil, ‘Science in the Kitchen and beyond: Cooking with Pellegrino Artusi in Post-Unified Italy’, *Public Understanding of Science (Bristol, England)* 29, no. 1 (2020): 112–20, 113.

mangiare i legumi lessati senza condimento o al più con il poco di burro; noi, popoli meridionali, abbiamo bisogno che il sapore delle vivande ecciti alquanto.’ [We leave to the English the pleasure of eating boiled vegetables without seasoning, or at the most a bit of butter; we people of the South need something that excites the taste.]¹⁴¹ It appears that the notorious ‘plain-boiled’ English way of preparing vegetables was an internationally-held stereotype, and like other cookbook authors, Ross intended her recipes as an antidote.¹⁴² In fact, it would not be an exaggeration to describe one of the main objectives of vegetable cookbooks during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in terms of a quixotic struggle to establish that—as Cowen and Beaty-Pownall quipped—‘to ensure properly boiled vegetables, they should never be boiled at all’.¹⁴³

Conclusion: Virtue through Vegetables

Formulating vegetarianism’s main premise in positive as opposed to negative terms (i.e. eating vegetables instead of not eating meat) enables us to zoom out and consider what other groups were saying about eating vegetables. This wider perspective helps us trace the origins of various arguments used within the movement, as well as noticing how vegetarians shaped the discourse around vegetable-eating even for authors not invested in the movement. Although early nineteenth-century vegetarian groups had envisioned themselves as catalysts for comprehensive social change, by the turn of the century eating more vegetables had become a means for individual self-improvement. Vegetables, in a word, could make a person better. Which particular form that self-improvement took depended on a variety of social and cultural factors. For the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century inheritors of the vegetarian movement, adopting a ‘bloodless’ or ‘fleshless’ diet represented a rejection of violence towards both humans and animals. While vegetarians frequently addressed the issue of animal cruelty, they typically also connected it to worker conditions in meat processing plants and general human tendencies towards vice and violence. They viewed vegetarianism not only as a solution to the problem of cruelty towards animals, but as a means to refine human

¹⁴¹ Pellegrino Artusi, *La Scienza In Cucina E L’Arte Di Mangiar Bene* (Florence: Salvatore Landi, 1891), <http://archive.org/details/artusi-1891>, 190.

¹⁴² J. Ross, *Leaves*, 1899, vii.

¹⁴³ Cowen and Beaty-Pownall, *Meals without Meat*, 107.

nature and therefore indirectly bring about positive social change of various sorts. On an individual level, cookbook authors argued that plant-based foods made people more peaceable and kind, and eating them paved the way to heaven, or at least demonstrated one's moral superiority.

However, these ethical arguments only went so far in convincing wider audiences. Therefore, some cookbook authors set their sights on more earthly goals: mobilising 'dainty' vegetable preparations or aesthetic garnishes—and their historical and literary connotations—to showcase culture, class, femininity and erudition. In turn, vegetarian cookbook authors leaning towards haute cuisine shaped the perception of vegetables in the wider culinary milieu of Britain and the United States, influencing home economics instructors like Rorer to rethink the traditional centrality of meat and provide alternatives. Even as the world widened, granting Anglophone consumers access to new crops in and out of season, cookbooks taught them how to use the fruits of the earth to reinforce existing gendered, socio-cultural, and racialised power structures, while improving their own positions within them. Some vegetarians envisioned a worldwide fellowship of plant eaters, inviting Buddhist or Hindu vegetarians to Western vegetarian conventions and extolling them as examples of vegetarian virtue. However, this global vision was a side-note at best; far more common was the appropriation and exoticisation of foreign cuisines so that the up-and-coming middle classes on both sides of the Atlantic could participate in the colonial project through the intimate act of eating the Empire. The perception, preparation and eating of vegetables acted as a transfiguring mirror, both reflecting the values of the time and allowing people to literally consume them, in the process transforming themselves to resemble their idealised visions of virtue, accomplishment, social status and imperial power. Vegetarians saw within this mirror the dream of a meatless 'golden age', and mobilised every cultural trend they saw to shepherd their readers towards it.



CHAPTER 2: EARTHLIE EXCRESCENCES AND PROPRIETARY FOODS

The Economic Side of Eating Vegetables

'Whole hundred-weights of rich, wholesome diet rotting under the trees; woods teeming with food and not one hand to gather it; and this, perhaps, in the midst of poverty and all manner of privations and public prayers against imminent famine.'

-C.D. Badham

'I have frequently prescribed the "Food of Health" introduced by Dr. Nichols. I am well satisfied with it as a highly nutritious and easily digestible food.'

Dr. E. Haughton, M.R.C.S., Upper Norwood

Chapter 2

Earthlie Excrescences and Proprietary Foods

While religious, cultural and gastronomic traditions did much to shape culinary discourse, zooming out further to examine the economic pressures and opportunities of the period offers additional insights into the uses of vegetable eating. A theme many cookbook authors touched upon was the relative inexpensiveness of vegetables. Meat had always been hard to come by for the poor, who from at least medieval times perforce subsisted on a largely plant-based diet, supplementing with meat only on the rare occasions when they could afford it. In fact, in the nineteenth century a family's social status could be accurately pegged to the proportion of plant to animal food in their diet. Notaker quotes Engels' 1845 observation that among the English, meat consumption 'diminished for every step down the social ladder'.¹⁴⁴ Late nineteenth-century reformers and social philanthropists were preoccupied with feeding the poor, both by improving domestic economy and also encouraging such thrifty practices as gardening and foraging. At the same time, increasing devotion to plant-based eating among the wealthy and middle class presented an opportunity for enterprising vegetarian entrepreneurs. During this period many 'proprietary' foods were developed, consisting of plant-based ingredients, but touted as having the nutritional and gustatory properties of meat. The inventors (and sometimes other authors) devoted entire cookbooks to teaching people how to use these proprietary foods, which along with other products were conveniently advertised between recipes. Vegetable-based eating may have provided some economic benefit for ordinary people, but it was downright lucrative for those inventing new ways to make eating plants profitable.

Teaching the Poor to Economise

When the London publishing firm Cassell and Company added a title on *Vegetarian Cookery* to their series of Home Handbooks and Cookery Books, they

¹⁴⁴ Notaker, *History of Cookbooks*, 187.

subtitled it 'A manual of cheap and wholesome diet'.¹⁴⁵ Author A. G. Payne explained his focus in the preface, pointing out that 'while there are thousands who are vegetarians from choice, there are tens of thousands who are virtually vegetarians from necessity'.¹⁴⁶ His hope was to reach this second group, 'whose whole life is one continual struggle' with the aim of rendering them 'not only better in health but richer in pocket'.¹⁴⁷ Payne's plan to lift the economically disadvantaged by teaching them to eat cheap and wholesome vegetables was not new. The best-selling cookery book in early nineteenth-century Britain was Mrs. Rundell's *System of Practical Domestic Economy*, which provided budgets for a family of five to subsist on either 33 or 21 shillings a week.¹⁴⁸ Rundell's major strategy for reducing costs was one that poverty-stricken families had been practicing without prompting for centuries: reducing meat. Over the next several decades, many similar cookbooks were published, aimed at directing the consumption habits of the poor away from what was seen as excess and frivolity and towards nourishing—if sometimes monotonous—dietary habits.

By the turn of the century there was a long tradition of cookbooks and manuals of domestic economy based on the premise that poverty could be eliminated if only the poor could be taught to economise.¹⁴⁹ The interest of reformers in controlling the diets of the lower classes went beyond mere didactic persuasion. In 1880s London, a group of vegetarian food reformers organised dinners and conferences intended to address 'the problem of poverty'; their proposed solution was a dietary one, enumerated in numerous supporting pamphlets with such titles as 'The Advantages of a Vegetarian Diet in Workhouses and Prisons'.¹⁵⁰ Indeed, some of the cookbooks written for the poor were little more than pamphlets. Larger, more elegant tomes were beyond the reach of people who could barely afford to feed themselves. The comprehensively titled *Dr. Nichols' penny vegetarian cookery: the science and the art of selecting and preparing a pure, healthful, and sufficient diet*

¹⁴⁵ Payne, *Cassell's Vegetarian*, title page.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 5.

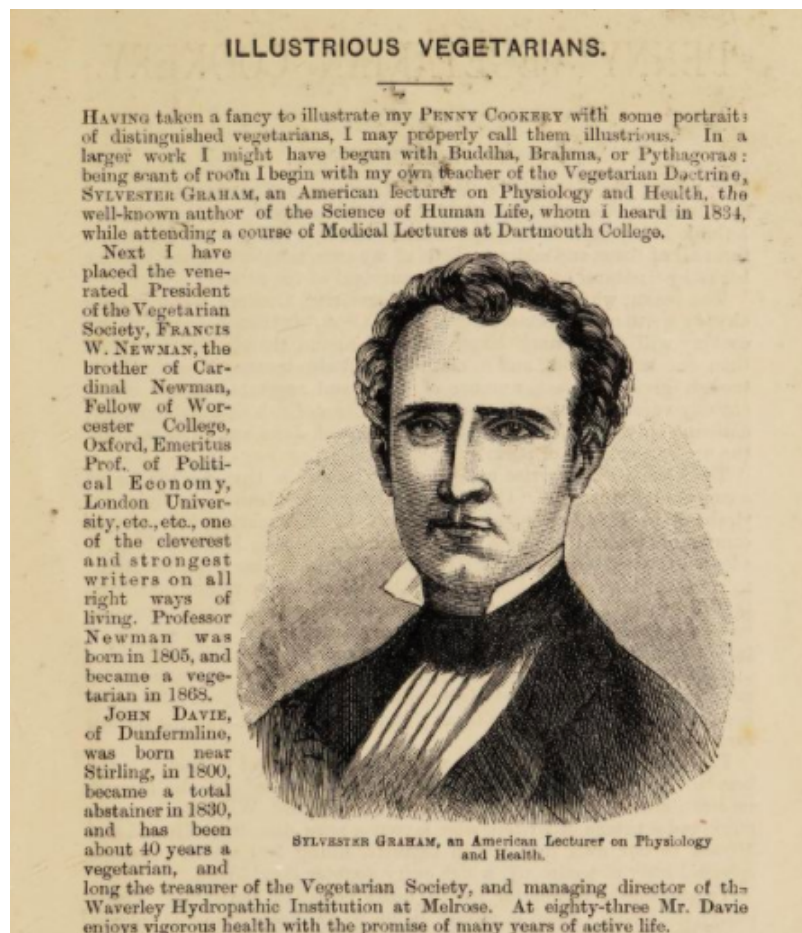
¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Spencer, *Vegetarianism*, 242.

¹⁴⁹ Notaker, *History of Cookbooks*, 196; See also Veit, whose chapter on dietary studies of the American poor in the late 1890s illustrates the 'conceit beloved of middle-class reformers: that if only the poor would be stricter with themselves, if only they would deny themselves more and economize more stringently, the worst effects of poverty would not exist' ('Dietary Studies from Alabama, New York, Chicago, Virginia, and New Mexico, 1895–1897', Veit, *Gilded Age*, 164).

¹⁵⁰ Spencer, *Vegetarianism*, 261; this group was a radical London offshoot of the British Vegetarian Society, and eventually went on to become the Fabian Society.

illustrated by food diagrams and portraits of distinguished vegetarians came in at a mere 42 pages.¹⁵¹



A portrait of Sylvester Graham, one of the 'illustrious vegetarians' described by Dr. Nichols in his introductory matter for *Penny Vegetarian Cookery*¹⁵²

Of those pages, perhaps a quarter were devoted to recipes, the rest being occupied with justifications for a vegetarian diet, glowing endorsements of the work of the eponymous Dr. Nichols, and advertisements for various foodstuffs. Nichols defended—even celebrated—this paucity of actual instruction on preparing food, expostulating that 'most cookery books give too many recipes', and insisting that the few he had included would 'be found useful, and sufficient for all ordinary purposes'.¹⁵³ Here we are a world away from Hill's aesthetic garden of cookery, or the sophisticated French tastes of Cowen and her gentlewoman readers. Instead,

¹⁵¹ Nichols, *Penny Vegetarian*, 1888.

¹⁵² Ibid., 3.

¹⁵³ Ibid., 20.

Nichols emphasised hearty, traditional fare like 'Frumenty, once a Lord Mayor's dish, and a staple food of our robust ancestors'.¹⁵⁴ Food for the poor was to be a practical affair, with the single goal of procuring the most nutrition and fuel from the smallest possible expenditure.

Attention to matters like gustatory pleasure did not apply for authors like Nichols; plainness in diet was for them a virtue. The recipes in *Penny Vegetarian Cookery* mention a total of only eight different vegetables to be used in cooking, along with a few salad greens. The inclusion of so few types of vegetables is in stark contrast to an author for the upper class like Ross, whose Italian-inspired cookbook covers over three dozen different vegetables, including six types of fresh beans alone.¹⁵⁵ This lack of variety was a hallmark of lower-class food consumption; the stereotypical Irish mono-diet of potatoes put them at the bottom of the socioeconomic ladder in Engels' analysis.¹⁵⁶ However, Nichols turns this necessity into a virtue, arguing that the Irish are correct in living on potatoes, for 'nothing else would give them so large a crop, and that it is good food they have shown by producing the largest, strongest men and most beautiful women'.¹⁵⁷ He is effusive over the merits of the potato, devoting more than ten percent of his recipe section to the praise and preparation of this inexpensive, non-perishable vegetable.¹⁵⁸

Not all authors were as extreme in limiting the number of ingredients as Nichols. However, it was a common idea that the less fortunate would be overwhelmed by mention of too many vegetables; the more esoteric ones might be unknown, unattainable, or both. Equally difficult was the matter of giving exact quantities and measurements of vegetables, which came in a large variety of shapes and sizes. The late nineteenth century was a period when recipes were beginning to be standardised in the modern form of a list of ingredients with precise measurements, and exact instructions for preparation, heat levels, and cooking times. However, many cookbooks, including Payne's, adhered to the old, familiar form of prose paragraphs, often with inexact instructions such as 'bake for a few

¹⁵⁴ Nichols, *Penny Vegetarian*, 1888, 23.

¹⁵⁵ J. Ross, *Leaves*, 1899, Table of Contents (xv-xxviii).

¹⁵⁶ Notaker, *History of Cookbooks*, 187.

¹⁵⁷ Nichols, *Penny Vegetarian*, 1888, 21.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 25. In particularly straitened circumstances when even potatoes are unattainable, he advises the reader that turnips can be substituted with the addition of a little oatmeal or peas-meal.

minutes in a fierce oven'.¹⁵⁹ Although Payne stewed over the problem of 'avoiding vague expressions' for nearly an entire page during his introduction to soups, he considered the difficulty 'insuperable', in the end recommending as absolutely essential to cooking only two things: common sense and experience.¹⁶⁰ However, he seems to have presumed his own readers lacking in even these essentials. His explanation for the choice to 'avoid giving too many ingredients' revealed the low level of knowledge and experience he expected from them: he believed that they would have difficulty telling the difference between vegetables that were essential to the recipe and those included only to impart 'a slight extra flavour'.¹⁶¹ Nichols' philosophy on essential vs. inessential vegetables was perhaps even less extravagant. As a final note to his section on salads, he proclaims—perhaps cruelly, given his intended audience—that 'hunger is the best sauce', grudgingly conceding that he sees 'no harm in making food palatable by the moderate use of natural flavours'.¹⁶² For example, rather than only lettuce in a salad one could also include dandelion or peppergrass (cress). These greens might liven up a salad in an acceptably 'natural' manner, but for Nichols they would have had another significant advantage: his readers would likely have been able to find both plants growing as prolific weeds, providing the ultimate in inexpensive cookery. In fact, in the portion of his introduction dedicated to vegetables he adds spring nettles as a 'nice and healthy' green that 'can be freely gathered by the roadside in country places'.¹⁶³

The Spurned Harvest: Foraging for Mushrooms

As Nichols implies with his recommendation of greens gathered by the roadside, better even than buying cheap vegetables was finding them growing wild for free. One such food—which some reformers considered under-utilised by the poor—was mushrooms. These appeared frequently in cookbooks intended for upper- and middle-class audiences, often in preparations designed to accentuate

¹⁵⁹ Payne, *Cassell's Vegetarian*, 114, in a recipe for 'Cheese Straws' containing 'equal quantities of grated Parmesan cheese, grated bread crumbs that have been rubbed through a wire sieve, butter, and flour' along with 'a little cayenne and grated nutmeg'.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 18.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 18-19. For example, onion, celery, carrot and turnip he cited as necessities in the making of soups; exotic and flavourful herbs like tarragon, chervil or sorrel, on the other hand, were not worth mentioning, as they would have been 'not only unobtainable but never even been heard of at the greengrocer's shop'.

¹⁶² Nichols, *Penny Vegetarian*, 1888, 23.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, 18.

class. For example, in *Leaves from Our Tuscan Kitchen* Ross gives thirteen recipes involving five different varieties of mushrooms, with another eight preparations for truffles.¹⁶⁴ Similarly, having already completed her series of ‘à la mode’ cookbooks, Harriet Anne De Salis makes her ‘reappearance in the gastronomic art’ with *Dressed vegetables à la mode*, in its fifth edition by 1900, and published in London, New York and Bombay.¹⁶⁵ Included in her panoply of French-titled vegetable dainties are several mushroom and truffle-based recipes like ‘Morelles à l’Andalouse’ and ‘Truffles à la Serviette’, the latter intended to be ‘dished up on a snow-white napkin’.¹⁶⁶

While the wealthy and well-heeled were serving mushrooms on snow-white napkins and under glass, author W. Hamilton Gibson saw them as an untapped source of nourishment for the economically disadvantaged. His lengthy and meandering 1903 opus, *Our Edible Toadstools and Mushrooms*, laments what a lavishly embellished opening epigram refers to as this ‘spurned harvest’.¹⁶⁷ Gibson imagines ‘whole hundred-weights of rich, wholesome diet rotting under the trees; woods teeming with food and not one hand to gather it.’ For him, the irony of this ungathered bounty was that it existed ‘in the midst of poverty and all manner of privations and public prayers against imminent famine’.¹⁶⁸ If only the poor could be taught to go out into the woods and gather mushrooms, according to Gibson, poverty and hunger could effectively be eliminated—and one must add, without any extra funds or effort from the government or higher tiers of society. Fungus could provide free food for all.

However, most of the book is devoted to addressing what he considered the central challenge to his advocacy of edible fungus: the fact that the wrong type of mushrooms could be not nourishing, but fatal, and telling the difference was no simple matter. In fact, the book begins with a dedication advising his readers that ‘forewarned is forearmed’, and referring them particularly to the frontispiece illustration depicting ‘The deadly “Amanita”’.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁴ J. Ross, *Leaves*, 1899, 72-76, 147-150.

¹⁶⁵ De Salis, *Dressed Vegetables*, title page.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 34, 71.

¹⁶⁷ William Hamilton Gibson, *Our Edible Toadstools and Mushrooms and How to Distinguish Them; a Selection of Thirty Native Food Varieties* (New York and London: Harper & brothers, 1903), <http://archive.org/details/ouredibletoadst02gibsgoog>, illustrated epigram facing page 1. See the title page of this chapter for the full text of the epigram.

¹⁶⁸ Gibson, *Edible Toadstools*, 1.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, frontispiece.



THE DEADLY "AMANITA".

Frontispiece illustration for William Hamilton Gibson's *Our edible toadstools and mushrooms*. Notice the arrow directing the eye towards the death's head on the root-bulb of the harvested toadstool.¹⁷⁰

In the same vein, Gibson opens his introduction with a justification of his decision to write this popular guide to mushrooms despite urgent advice to the

¹⁷⁰ Gibson, *Edible Toadstools*, frontispiece.

contrary in the interest of public health and safety from 'a prominent botanical authority connected with one of our universities'.¹⁷¹ For him, promoting and educating about this food source was more important than the trivial matter of possibly conducting his readers in the direction of life-threatening mushroom poisoning. Unfortunately, although he provides numerous coloured plates and instructions for distinguishing between the edible and the prejudicial, some of his advice is suspect at best; for instance, when describing how to approach an unknown mushroom he advises readers to 'begin by a mere nibble'.¹⁷²

After nearly 300 pages of idiosyncratic prose on identifying mushrooms, Gibson proceeds to the recipes, commencing with a catalogue of which varieties substitute best for various types of meat: *Fistulina hepatica* for beefsteak, puff-balls for sweetbreads, hydna 'as good as oysters', *Agaricus heterophyllus*, 'which tastes like a crawfish when grilled', and so on.¹⁷³ In his opinion, fungus constituted a 'perfect substitute' for animal food, both 'chemically and gastronomically'. His recipes were gathered from a variety of different sources, but he made his own modifications.¹⁷⁴ French vocabulary is mostly (but not entirely) absent; however, it is still unlikely that this chatty volume, peppered with Latin nomenclature and lavishly illustrated with colour plates, would have been bought or read by anyone economically disadvantaged. Nevertheless, the hope of feeding the less fortunate with fungus was commonly held by food reformers of the time. Agricultural departments put out free bulletins introducing mushrooms, which gradually increased their popularity as a foodstuff among the public at large.¹⁷⁵

Gibson's was not the only illustrated book-length guide to identifying and preparing mushrooms, although other authors were less sanguine about the potential of fungus as a panacea for hunger. Nina L. Marshall's 1901 *The Mushroom Book* was a more scientific treatment of the subject, which also included a recipe section at the end. She opined that fungi could 'never take the place of meat, as many fondly hoped, nor rank very high as an essential food', citing recent experiments in 'artificial digestion' by a Yale chemist.¹⁷⁶ However, she provides

¹⁷¹ Gibson, *Edible Toadstools*, 1.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, 34.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 299-300.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 302.

¹⁷⁵ Nina L. (Nina Lovering) Marshall, *The Mushroom Book. A Popular Guide to the Identification and Study of Our Commoner Fungi, with Special Emphasis on the Edible Varieties* (New York: Doubleday, Page, 1901), <http://archive.org/details/mushroombookpopug00mars>, page 152.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

recipes for a far larger number of species of fungus, giving the impression that she herself must have prepared and eaten all fifteen or so of the different varieties she describes, and knew which were best fried, stewed, or simply served raw.¹⁷⁷

Perhaps the most scholarly offering on mushrooms came from one of Marshall's sources, George Francis Atkinson, a professor of botany at Cornell University associated with the university's Agricultural Experiment Station.¹⁷⁸ His 1900 *Studies of American fungi* is the work of a careful academic; he brings in other experts for the sections outside his own expertise, including chemistry, toxicology and phenological terms. J.F. Clark, the chemical expert, dismisses Gibson's claims out of hand, pointing out that the caloric composition of mushrooms resembles not that of meat, or even potatoes, but cabbage. He goes so far as to price out how much in caloric value 1.5 cents would fetch of various foodstuffs at the market, concluding that flour was cheapest, followed by cabbage, and finally mushrooms as a distant third. Well beyond the purview of chemistry is his statement in the following paragraph that mushrooms nevertheless have a 'distinct and very great value' as 'among the most appetizing of table delicacies and add greatly to the palatability of many foods when cooked with them'.¹⁷⁹ The recipe section expert—none other than the celebrated Rorer—evidently agreed with Clark, providing several pages of mushroom preparations, accompanied by her trademark explanations of cooking techniques and their rationales.¹⁸⁰

Of course, there was a middle ground between classing mushrooms in purely caloric terms for the benefit of the poor and creating aristocratic truffle and fungus preparations to be served at society dinners. *Cassell's Vegetarian Cookery* starts off its section on 'Savoury Dishes' with several mushroom recipes and the oft-repeated assertion that when mushrooms could be gathered in abundance 'like blackberries', they were a 'great boon' to vegetarians.¹⁸¹ Unlike Rorer and Ross, whose recipes were designed for specific species of fungi, Payne at most distinguishes between "very small" and "larger" mushrooms, aiming for descriptions that would not intimidate the reader.¹⁸² Anyone could use his instructions to make a hearty

¹⁷⁷ Marshall, *Mushroom Book*, 153-155.

¹⁷⁸ George Francis Atkinson et al., *Studies of American Fungi. Mushrooms, Edible, Poisonous, Etc* (Ithaca: Andrus & Church, 1900), <http://archive.org/details/studiesofamericaf00atki>, title page.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 247-248.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 231-242.

¹⁸¹ Payne, *Cassell's Vegetarian*, 108.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, 108-109.

mushroom pudding or pie. After almost an apology for the French title, even his recipe for *Mushrooms à la Bordelaise* is described as consisting of ‘ordinary grilled mushrooms, served in a sauce composed of oil or oiled butter, chopped up with parsley and garlic, thickened with the yolks of eggs’.¹⁸³ Where possible, cookbooks like Payne’s avoided difficult names altogether and simply called the dishes after the relevant cooking methodologies, which would have been recognisable for readers: mushrooms grilled, baked, fried, stewed, etc.

As is evident from the differences in the way the nutritional value of the subject was treated in these books, the science at the time was at best contradictory.¹⁸⁴ Gibson went to some lengths to establish fungus as a potential staple, Marshall was more sceptical, and Atkinson’s expert spent as much time on chemical analysis of toxicity as the food value of mushrooms. However, as Payne showed with his simple, unpretentious recipes, while fungus might not have been the ultimate solution to widespread hunger, it could at least be incorporated as part of modest as well as upper-class diets.

Home and Market Gardening

Besides foraging in the forest and economising on meat, another way to help the family’s food budget go farther as well as perhaps expand the variety of vegetables on the table was to grow a garden. This strategy applied not only to the poor, but also to those in the middle class who desired good, varied produce within their budgets. Italian immigrants in the United States—always notorious for their ‘passion for vegetables’—had long been growing tomatoes, eggplants, peppers and greens for themselves and their neighbours in whatever small patches of ground they could find.¹⁸⁵ But as the nineteenth century drew to a close, such gardens, producing vegetables either for personal use or sale at a local market, became more widespread among the general population. This growing interest in home gardening was reflected in the title of the new official publication of the Vegetarian Society of America during the 1890s: *Food, Home and Garden*.¹⁸⁶ Cookbook authors also took

¹⁸³ Payne, *Cassell’s Vegetarian*, 110.

¹⁸⁴ Chapter 3 covers in depth the nutritional paradigms, research and debates of the day, including the emphasis on protein, the small amount of which mushrooms contained was the main reason they failed to pass muster as a meat substitute, according to several authors.

¹⁸⁵ Veit, *Gilded Age*, 8.

¹⁸⁶ Shprintzen, *Vegetarian Crusade*, 150.

notice of the growing gardening trend, producing recipes responding to the increase in availability and variety of vegetables. Emma P. Ewing's *Vegetables and Vegetable Cooking* opens with the rationale that 'market gardening is becoming so important an industry that the production of vegetables is rapidly on the increase'.¹⁸⁷ Her book is intended to teach readers who have been accustomed only to their daily boiled potatoes how to prepare this abundant new harvest.

Similarly, Burns describes an 'explosion of interest in gardening among all levels of English Society' during the nineteenth century, fueled in part by the more widespread availability of illustrated books on the subject, which new printing techniques rendered cheap enough for purchase by the lower classes as well as the wealthy.¹⁸⁸ According to Notaker, it was also around this time that gardening began to be separated from other branches of agriculture and designated a uniquely feminine pursuit.¹⁸⁹ Some authors therefore adapted the female genre of cookbooks to embrace the cultivation as well as the preparation of vegetables, producing gardening manuals that incorporated cookery or vice versa. This intimacy with the life cycle of garden produce is presaged in Ewing's 'Preliminary Remarks', when she gives what she considers to be appropriate cooking times for each type of vegetable. She notes that the times are approximations, and vary depending on the vegetable's 'maturity or age', as well as the season.¹⁹⁰

A decade later, *Gardening à la mode*—*vegetables* would join De Salis's popular cookery series, which encompassed not only the previously mentioned *Vegetables à la mode*, but also many others, including similar 'à la mode' volumes on oysters, cakes and confections, savouries, etc., as well as *Tempting Dishes for Small Incomes*.¹⁹¹ In an effort to build rapport with readers new to cultivating their own vegetables, de Salis recounts in the preface her own experience of moving to the countryside, at which time she (and her husband, presumably) were 'such Cockneys' they knew nothing of gardening, and had to learn through trial and error.¹⁹² She organises the book alphabetically by vegetable, and each section

¹⁸⁷ Emma (Pike) Ewing, *Vegetables and Vegetable Cooking* (Chicago: Fairbanks, Palmer & co., 1884), <http://archive.org/details/vegetablesvegeta00ewin>, 3.

¹⁸⁸ Mary Burns, 'Printing and Publishing the Illustrated Botanical Book in Nineteenth Century Great Britain', *Cogent Arts & Humanities* 4, no. 1 (2017): 1364058, 2.

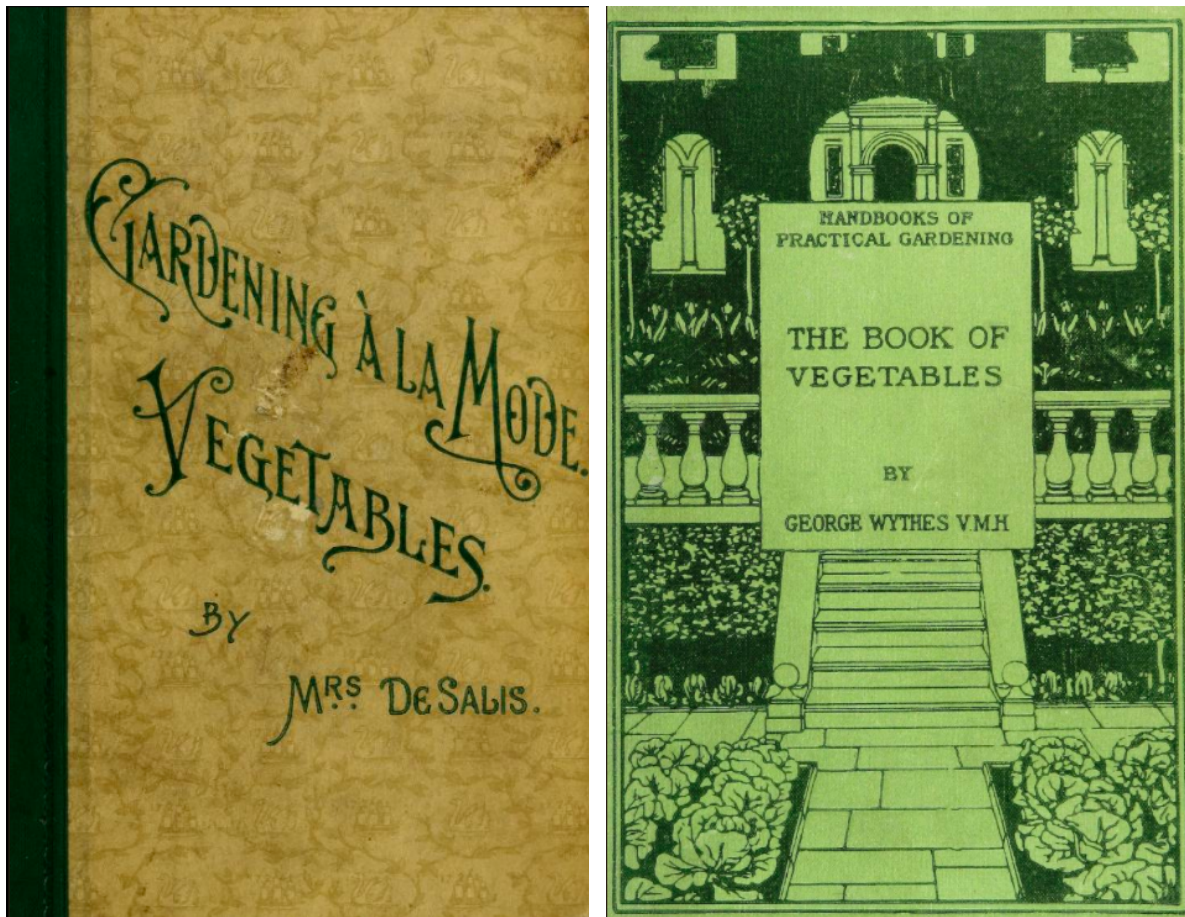
¹⁸⁹ Notaker, *History of Cookbooks*, 290.

¹⁹⁰ Ewing, *Vegetables*, 5.

¹⁹¹ De Salis, *Gardening à La Mode*, 'Works by Mrs. De Salis', facing title page. Notice that this last title, intended for those with 'small incomes' drops her trademark 'à la mode'.

¹⁹² De Salis, *Gardening*, preface.

consists of a few lines of history followed by cultivation instructions and then two to four recipes. It seems to be aimed neither at the upper class nor the very poor; a liberal sprinkling of French elevates even simple preparations, but she is careful to let readers know that the several periodicals she recommends for more comprehensive gardening instruction each cost but a penny.¹⁹³ The rising middle class could, it seems, garden on a budget and prepare the cultivated vegetables, while still keeping everything fashionably 'à la mode'.



Covers for *Gardening à la Mode: Vegetables* and *The Book of Vegetables*, which combined instruction on how to grow vegetables with recipes for serving the resultant bounty. Both were published simultaneously in London and New York, as volumes in popular series of books on cooking and other home arts.¹⁹⁴

While de Salis came at gardening from the perspective of cookery, other books proceeded in the opposite direction. *The Book of Vegetables*, published in

¹⁹³ De Salis, *Gardening*, preface.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., cover; Wythes and Roberts, *Book of Vegetables*, cover.

1902 as part of a series on 'Practical Gardening', was authored by George Wythes, credentialed on the title page as 'Head Gardener to the Duke of Northumberland'.¹⁹⁵ After enumerating other qualifications, the preface explains that the V. M. H. appended to his name refers to his receipt of one of the original sixty Victoria Gold Medals of Honour in Horticulture awarded to celebrate the Jubilee of Queen Victoria only a few years before. In fact, in the issue of the *Journal of the Royal Horticultural Society of London* announcing the honour, his name appears no fewer than 32 times, mostly in reference to horticultural awards.¹⁹⁶ Wythes, then, appears to have been a name turn-of-the-century readers would have known and trusted when it came to gardening. Accordingly, his gardening instructions take centre stage, consuming the first two thirds of the book. How to utilise the harvest comes in finally at the end, in a section provided by the editor of the series, Harry Roberts. However, even here the 'History and Cookery of Vegetables' section emphasises the former at the expense of the latter, ranging through a dizzying array of classical, medieval and more recent historical anecdotes—liberally adorned with literary citations—before finally passing on to a few simple recipes. When it comes to cooking instruction, Roberts follows the time-honoured tradition of deferring to female authorities; he refers several times to 'Roundell', likely Julia Anne Elizabeth Roundell, author of an eponymous 1898 cookbook.¹⁹⁷ His usage of her last name with no introduction or explanation suggests that her book was popular enough that he could have expected readers to easily recognise her as a trusted source of cookery advice.

Roberts later recruited Roundell to author a book called *The Still-Room* for a related series he was editing: The Country Handbooks. As he had in Wythes' volume on gardening, Roberts took on a significant part of the writing, admitting in an editor's note that 'Mrs. Charles Roundell' had contributed only a few chapters, along with 'certain recipes scattered through the book'.¹⁹⁸ *The Still-Room* opens with a diatribe subscribing to the Ruskin theory of what constituted a lady. Roberts unfavourably contrasts 'the woman who throws her "Letters" — real or imaginary — before the eyes of the bored and lazy world' with his ideal woman, 'who is merely efficient in the

¹⁹⁵ Wythes and Roberts, *Book of Vegetables*, title page.

¹⁹⁶ Wilks, M.A., Rev. W., ed., 'The Victoria Medal of Honour in Horticulture, 1897', *Journal of the Royal Horticultural Society of London*. 21 (1897): 1–862, <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/164217>.

¹⁹⁷ Wythes and Roberts, *Book of Vegetables*, 100, 103, 104; The cookbook in question is probably Julia Anne Elizabeth Roundell, *Mrs. Roundell's Practical Cookery Book: With Many Family Recipes Hitherto Unpublished* (London: Bickers, 1898), <http://archive.org/details/b28131642>.

¹⁹⁸ Julia Anne Elizabeth Roundell and Harry Roberts, *The Still-Room* (London; New York: J. Lane: The Bodley head, 1903), <http://archive.org/details/stillroom00roun>, vii.

sphere allotted to her sex by nature'; i.e. cookery and other homemaking skills.¹⁹⁹ Like Ruskin, he casts the net of cookery wide: *The Still-Room* is a guide to cooking-adjacent arts like churning butter, pickling, bottling and drying fruits and vegetables, and making fermented products.



Frontispiece for *The Still-Room*²⁰⁰

The title refers to a location like that in the frontispiece illustration, dedicated to the distilling of herbal essences, home production of beer, wine, cheese, etc. Some of these techniques, particularly those relating to pickling, making jam, and other ways of laying up fruits and vegetables, turn up regularly in cookbooks of the period. These types of traditional preservation methods had been in use for

¹⁹⁹ Roundell and Roberts, *Still-Room*, 1. This introduction is entitled 'A Plea For Housewifery', and is not among the sections credited to Roundell.

²⁰⁰ William Pascoe, engraving, 'A Cornish Stiller of Herbs' in Roundell and Roberts, *The Still-Room*, frontispiece.

centuries, and *The Still-Room* contains abundant illustrations taken from older books describing these and similar practices. However, during the final decades of the nineteenth century, the new, more 'scientific' preservation method of canning began to gain the approval of influential cookbook authors such as the famous Rorer.²⁰¹ Roundell and Roberts include instructions for both older and more modern types of food preservation; their section on canning recommends specific brands of the newly-invented bottles and sterilising apparatus.²⁰² Whether readers embraced new techniques or stuck with the tried and true, these methods of preservation could help them utilise their own garden produce or inexpensive market vegetables to the fullest, as well as laying by a store of food for winter or lean financial times.

Another, simpler method of mitigating the inevitable ebb and flow of available produce was mentioned everywhere in cookbooks: special instructions or recipes for using vegetables that were less than perfect, due to being old, tough or hard. These tips would have helped not only gardeners trying to use up a seasonal overabundance, but also economically disadvantaged city-dwellers who went to the market late in the day to buy up the overripe, wilted or undesirable leavings at bargain prices.²⁰³ Edward Guyles Fulton's *Substitutes for Flesh Foods*, for example, instructs readers how to salvage 'vegetables that have been touched with the frost'.²⁰⁴ Ewing's vegetable cooking timetables include instructions for cooking both 'young beets' (45 minutes) and 'old beets' (3-5 hours).²⁰⁵ Other authors recommended strategies like turning older or 'less choice' turnips into mash, or saving the pithy inside part of carrots for stock or a mixed vegetable dish.²⁰⁶ Vegetable stock was a popular usage for vegetable trimmings in vegetarian cookbooks. In *Unproprietary Foods*, Miles admonished cooks to 'look in the common dustbin' to find 'many valuable foods which should be in the stock pot'; his examples include 'outside leaves of lettuce, tops of turnips, tops of celery, peelings of potatoes, half squeezed lemons'.²⁰⁷ The term 'left-over' first appeared in print in 1891, but whether they used the newly-minted word or not, cookbook authors were quick to

²⁰¹ Berndt, 'Science Strikes', 19.

²⁰² Roundell and Roberts, *Still-Room*, 63.

²⁰³ Veit, *Gilded Age*, 22.

²⁰⁴ Edward Guyles Fulton, *Substitutes for Flesh Foods : Vegetarian Cook Book* (Oakland, Calif.: Pacific Press, 1904), <http://archive.org/details/substitutesforf100fultrich>, 117.

²⁰⁵ Ewing, *Vegetable Cooking* 5.

²⁰⁶ Wythes and Roberts, *Book of Vegetables*, 83; and Payne, *Cassell's Vegetarian*, 28.

²⁰⁷ Miles, *Unproprietary Foods*, 123.

propose strategies for repurposing cooked vegetables.²⁰⁸ Ewing advised readers that such remains ‘need never be thrown away or wasted’, but with skill could be re-used in ‘numberless dishes that are attractive and appetizing’.²⁰⁹ Roberts lamented even the waste of pea pods, which he promised would become tender after being cooked ‘for a considerable time’ in salted water; at the very least, if the pods themselves were still judged inedible, the thrifty cook could always fall back on using the water in which they had been boiled as vegetable stock.²¹⁰

Whether it was a matter of foregoing meat for cheaper plant-based meals, growing and foraging for the fruits of the earth, or learning clever ways to preserve and utilise what was abundant or would otherwise be discarded, judicious usage of vegetables made for a more thrifty kitchen. Ruskin’s exhortation that ladies aspire to ‘the economy of your great-grandmothers’ was an expression of the Protestant value of thrift, applicable even where it was not strictly necessary to ward off starvation. Cookbook authors used their authority and platform to promote the usage and preservation of vegetables both to the poor and to middle-class cooks aspiring to a more perfect domestic economy. Not only could vegetables address the problem of hunger; but their inherent economic efficiency—and therefore their contribution to the thriftiness of the cook—was a good in itself.

Proprietary and Unproprietary Foods

A counterpoint to the promotion of vegetables as a way to economise was the simultaneous usage of vegetarian cookbooks to entice readers to spend money. Shprintzen describes how in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries ‘vegetarianism became intertwined with the burgeoning movements of muscular masculinity, organized sports, home economics, and health advocacy, in each instance connecting these ideologies with the power of product consumption’.²¹¹ One simple method of mobilising cookbooks for capitalist ends was to include advertisements for related products. For example, where some cookbooks had an ornate frontispiece, the vegetable volume of a set of cookbooks based on the

²⁰⁸ Veit, *Gilded Age*, 149.

²⁰⁹ Ewing, *Vegetables*, 39.

²¹⁰ Wythes and Roberts, *Book of Vegetables*, 99.

²¹¹ Shprintzen, *Vegetarian Crusade*, 5.

cookery section of the London-based *Queen* newspaper opened instead with an advertisement for 'the hygienic vegetable rack'.

Advertisements.

THE HYGIENIC VEGETABLE RACK.

(REGISTERED.)

CLEANLY & CONVENIENT.—"The Queen."

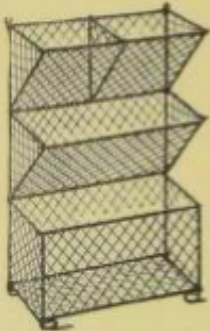
No. 1.

30 inches High

18 " Wide

8½ in. back to front.

Price 11/6



No. 2.

36 inches High

24 " Wide

12 in. back to front.

Price 16/6

The storing of the small quantity of Vegetables that must be kept in every well organised Household (such, for instance, as Carrots, Turnips, Onions, &c.) is a troublesome matter. The articles are ordinarily all crowded together, becoming stale, or decaying, to the detriment of the rest of the provisions. It is to obviate this unwholesome method that the Hygienic Vegetable Rack has been devised: it takes up very little room and can be stood on the floor or hung on the wall. There are four separate bins which enables the vegetables to be kept apart, all the dust &c., falls to the ground and can be swept up, whilst the open wire reveals any single article which may have become unfit for use, thereby ensuring its instant removal.

**THE HOUSEHOLD SUPPLY & ATMOSPHERIC
CHURN CO. LTD.,
119, NEW BOND STREET, W.**

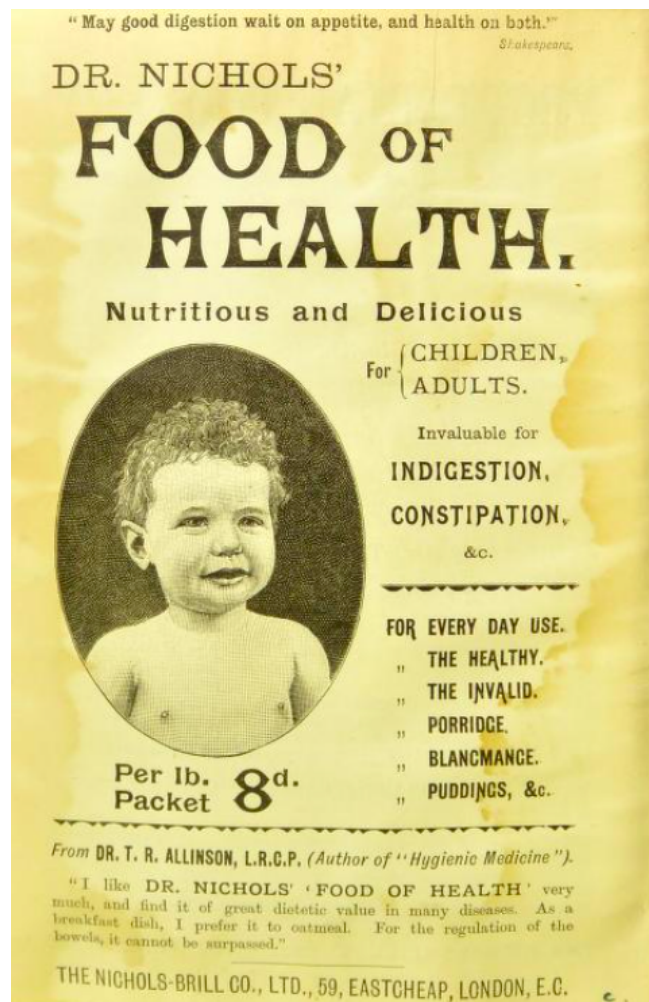
Advertisement facing the title page of Beaty-Pownell's *The "Queen" Cookery Books, Volume 10: Vegetables*²¹²

These advertisements presumably served the business need of helping fund cookbook publication. However, Young argues in his study of a late nineteenth-century monthly vegetarian journal that for such periodicals 'advocacy and advertising were complementary rather than antithetical'.²¹³ Similarly, for some

²¹² S. Beaty-Pownall, *The 'Queen' Cookery Books: Vegetables* (London: Horace Cox, 1902), <http://archive.org/details/b28090044>, advertisement facing title page.

²¹³ Young, 'Eating Serial', 78.

authors of vegetarian cookbooks, advocacy of a vegetable-based diet and advertising products that made that lifestyle more workable went hand-in-hand. Often this advertising went well beyond vegetables themselves, or implements to handle and serve them. A key feature in the vegetarian movement of the time was the development of processed 'proprietary' foods. In the United States, newly invented cereal products like Kellogg's Corn Flakes and Post's Grape-Nuts were becoming a whole new way to eat breakfast.²¹⁴ Other invented foods like 'Carnos' and 'Protose' set out to replace traditional meat-and-potatoes style dining with protein-rich, plant-based meat substitutes. Still other concoctions were promoted as healthful foods in their own right, and often bore the names of their inventors.



Advertisement for 'Dr. Nichols' Food of Health' behind the title page of the 1891 edition of *Penny Vegetarian Cookery*²¹⁵

²¹⁴ Veit, *Gilded Age*, 15.

²¹⁵ Nichols, *Penny Vegetarian*, 1891, 4.

Although we have explored Nichols' aim of using his 1888 *Penny Vegetarian Cookery* to teach the poor to economise, the cookbook had another purpose. Tucked away at the back after a comparatively lengthy introduction to his written works are advertisements for his own 'Food of Health', as well as branded baking powder, soap, dehydrated packets of soup, and other products.²¹⁶ Nichols obviously wished to use his cookbook as a tool for promoting his own products to the same people he was teaching to economise. His methodology is unsophisticated; however, a few years later a new edition evinces the keen marketing mind of the reviser, Dr. T. R. Allinson. The advertisements for Nichols' products in this edition come immediately on the inside front cover, and further promotions are sprinkled throughout the book.²¹⁷ Nichols's sober textual descriptions have been replaced with illustrated advertisements, heavier on marketing language and lighter on information; whereas in the 1888 edition Nichols describes his 'Food of Health' as consisting of the 'richest elements of the Vegetable Kingdom', the 1891 version makes no allusion to the food's ingredients, focusing instead on its many possible uses.²¹⁸

Two decades later, the enterprising Allinson had created his own proprietary staple, 'Dr. Allinson's Natural Food', which he promoted in a much more ambitious 175-page cookbook printed by 'The Natural Food Co.', the company that also sold all his branded products.²¹⁹ Priced at a single shilling—a nominal sum for a middle-class reader, and within reach even for those of lower socioeconomic status—*The Allinson Vegetarian Cookery Book* takes the entrepreneurial potential of the cookbook to new heights. Not only does it contain some sixty pages of pure promotional material, but only a few recipes fail to call for at least one of Dr. Allinson's products by name. If Young describes magazine editors facilitating 'porous borders between the journal's paratextual advertisements and internal content, or between its commercial and propagandistic functions', Allinson takes this intermingling to a whole new level.²²⁰ The commercial, propagandistic and practical elements of his cookbook blend together into a seamless whole, propelling the reader into an entire food ecosystem of Allinson's creation.

²¹⁶ Nichols, *Penny Vegetarian*, 1888, 30–40.

²¹⁷ Thomas Low Nichols, *Penny Vegetarian*, 1891. The publisher was also new, and Nichols-Brill Co. Ltd. appeared in advertisements throughout the book as the purveyor of Dr. Nichols' products, suggesting that cookbook and products were alike components of his commercial enterprise.

²¹⁸ Nichols, *Penny Vegetarian*, 1888, 36.

²¹⁹ Thomas Richard Allinson, *The Allinson Vegetarian Cookery Book* (London: The Natural Food Co., 1910), <http://archive.org/details/b21533507>, title page.

²²⁰ Young, 'Eating Serial', 79.



Cover of *The Allinson Vegetarian Cookery Book*²²¹

Of course, convincing people to accept new foods would always be a challenge. Most vegetarian cookbooks, including those heavily focused on ‘proprietary’ foods like those of Nichols and Allinson, sought to strike a pragmatic balance between recipes their readers would recognise and new ways of modifying or adding to their diets. This process of ‘mixing familiarity with novelty’ was a tricky

²²¹ Allinson, *Allinson Vegetarian*, cover. Although some companies gave away free promotional cookbooks, the price on the cover indicates that Allinson’s cookbooks provided some revenue.

business involving much experimentation, as they strove, in Young's words, to adapt 'new content to fit within traditional forms'.²²² These 'traditional forms' could be both figurative and literal; sometimes they took the actual form of vegetables, grains, and/or nuts shaped into the semblance of meat. Notaker describes how the long tradition of fast-day cookery provides many examples of fish being pressed into moulds or otherwise prepared to resemble meat.²²³ From here, it was no great leap to imagine doing something similar with plant products. One example of this practice is the prevalence of 'corn oysters' in American cookbooks of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Oysters themselves were a popular food at the time, eaten in great quantities by rich and poor alike before overfishing and pollution began to drive up prices around 1910.²²⁴ Mock oyster recipes appeared decades before this decline, possibly as a response to the seasonality of the oyster harvest.²²⁵ Dwight includes in her *Golden Age Cookbook*, for example, a recipe for 'Mock Oysters of Green Corn', a grated corn fritter held together by flour, egg, butter and milk.²²⁶ In service of her argument that vegetarians need not forego their favourite dishes when they gave up meat, she instructs readers to spoon the mixture into hot butter 'in oblong cakes—to look as much like oysters as possible'.²²⁷

However, that corn oysters were widely enjoyed on their own merits—and not simply as a virtuous vegetarian impersonation of shellfish—is evident from their inclusion in community cookbooks. These were cookbooks compiled by groups of women in religious or other communities to raise money for charities; thousands were produced during this period.²²⁸ Each woman contributed one or a few recipes, and they were bound together in pamphlet or book form, often interspersed with advertisements providing additional revenue beyond the price of the cookbook. Unlike the dishes contained in most cookbooks, one can reasonably surmise that these were beloved recipes everyday cooks made regularly in their own kitchens, as opposed to recipes cookbook authors wished them to make. Vegetables are not an

²²² Young, 'Eating Serial', 81.

²²³ Notaker, *History of Cookbooks*, 216.

²²⁴ Veit, *Gilded Age*, 24-25.

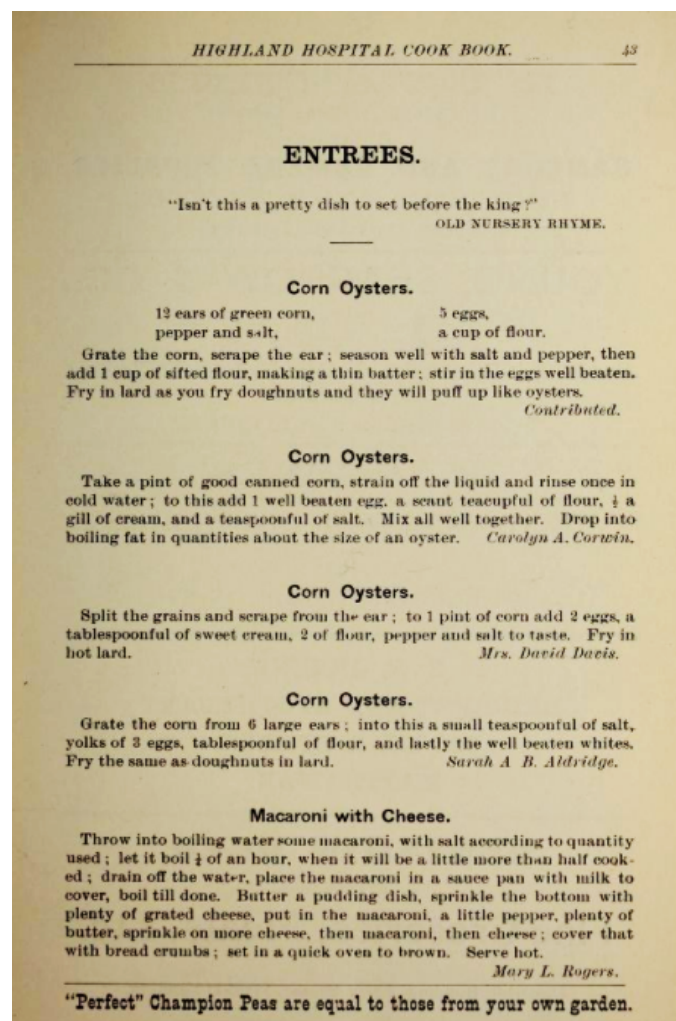
²²⁵ Another potential explanation is that corn oysters represented part of an influx of fried corn recipes from the American South to the rest of the country in the years following the Civil War, as the country attempted to reunite itself culturally.

²²⁶ Dwight, *Golden Age*, 67.

²²⁷ Ibid.

²²⁸ Janice Bluestein Longone, "'Tried Receipts': An Overview of America's Charitable Cookbooks" in Anne Bower, *Recipes for Reading: Community Cookbooks, Stories, Histories* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1997), 19-20.

especially prominent theme in such cookbooks, which tend to be compilations of favourite or showy recipes; sweets often feature heavily. Whether this is an indication that the average cook prepared relatively few vegetables or simply that such recipes were not considered interesting or tasty enough to submit as one's contribution to a charity cookbook is not clear. What is evident is that corn oysters were a notable exception. The 1900 *Highland Hospital Cook Book*—compiled to fund the building of a new hospital in Matteawan, New York—opens its section on Entrees with no fewer than four recipes in a row for 'Corn Oysters', each contributed by a different person.²²⁹



First page of 'Entrees' from the *Highland Hospital Cook Book*, commencing with several Corn Oyster recipes.²³⁰

²²⁹ Mrs. Samuel H. Parsons, *Highland Hospital Cook Book* (Fishkill Standard Print: Matteawan, N.Y., 1900), <http://archive.org/details/highlandhospital00pars>, 43.

²³⁰ Ibid.

Similarly, the *Wellesley Cook Book*, which raised funds for an addition to the Massachusetts community's Congregational Church, contained a recipe for 'Artificial Oysters', as well as a similar one for 'Corn Fritters' which directed that it should be fried 'the same as oysters'.²³¹ The heavy-hitters of the meat substitute scene, however, were products like Protose, Nuttose and Nuttolene, all three invented by Ella Kellogg in her experimental scientific kitchen at the Battle Creek Sanitarium or 'San' in Michigan.²³²



Advertisement for the Battle Creek Sanitarium ('San'), from the periodical *Good Health*, edited by John Kellogg.²³³

²³¹ I.A. Sandborn and Parlor Fund Committee, Wellesley Community Church, *The Wellesley Cook Book* (Boston: C. J. Peters and son, 1890), http://archive.org/details/wellesleycookboo00well_0. To add to the alternative oyster options, in a vegetable section otherwise dominated largely by potato and macaroni dishes, there was also a recipe for 'Vegetable Oysters', this one likely referring instead to the salsify plant (Ibid., 67). Thought to resemble oysters in flavour, the salsify root was equally often referred to as 'oyster plant'. Some cookbooks included both names (see, e.g., Heard, *Hygeia*, 14). Rorer also used salsify as a substitute for clams in a recipe for 'Mock Clam Chowder', as well as including it in 'Mock Oyster Soup' (See Rorer, *Vegetable Cookery*, 35, 31).

²³² Notaker, *History of Cookbooks*, 230. Ella Kellogg also wrote several cookbooks showcasing these foods and making the San's recipes available even for those without means to visit it.

²³³ J. H. Kellogg, MD, 'Advertisement for the Battle Creek Sanitarium', *Good Health*, February 1900, <https://documents.adventistarchives.org/Periodicals/HR/HR19000201-V35-02.pdf>, accessed May 19, 2021.

The San, run by her husband, Seventh Day Adventist vegetarian Dr. John Harvey Kellogg, was a popular health retreat for middle-class couples. In its heyday at the turn of the century, it could accommodate 2000 guests at a time. A significant component of its system of curing various maladies was the vegetarian diet it fed these guests.²³⁴ The Kelloggs understood that for people who had never lived as vegetarians, foods mimicking the taste and texture of meat could ease the transition and improve the chances that they would stick to a diet inspired by what they had learned at the San.²³⁵ Therefore, in contrast to the usual grain- or milk-based proprietary foods, they focused on creating products resembling meat in taste, form, nutrition and usability.

Another distinguishing characteristic of the Kelloggs was their success in running the business side of their enterprise, which eventually expanded into a food empire. They believed that nuts were the ‘vegetable analogue of meat’, and popularised them as a source of protein, developing nine meat substitutes using combinations of nuts, grains and seeds.²³⁶ The most successful of these, Protose, was a mix of cereals, wheat gluten and peanut butter, and sold to the public via mail-order catalogue, packaged like the canned meat that had recently become popular—only cheaper.²³⁷ Once again, eating these plant-based foods was touted as a way to economise; even a potential ‘solution to a possible meat famine’.²³⁸ At least theoretically, meat substitutes could also provide a way for people to enjoy tastier food and higher social status by allowing them to prepare dishes that had previously only been available to those with more access to meat.²³⁹ An important strategy for marketing products like these was the acquisition of the early twentieth-century version of ‘celebrity sponsors’. The San boasted a long list of famous guests, including Mary Todd Lincoln, William Howard Taft, Amelia Earhart, John D. Rockefeller Jr., Henry Ford, Alfred Dupont, Thomas Edison, William Jennings Bryan, and George Bernard Shaw.²⁴⁰ Clara Barton, founder of the American Red Cross, even provided a written testimonial about her experience eating Protose.²⁴¹

²³⁴ Shprintzen, *Vegetarian Crusade*, 126.

²³⁵ *Ibid.*, 127.

²³⁶ *Ibid.*, 128-129.

²³⁷ *Ibid.*, 131; Notaker, *History of Cookbooks*, 230.

²³⁸ Shprintzen, *Vegetarian Crusade*, 139.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*, 140.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 141.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 132.

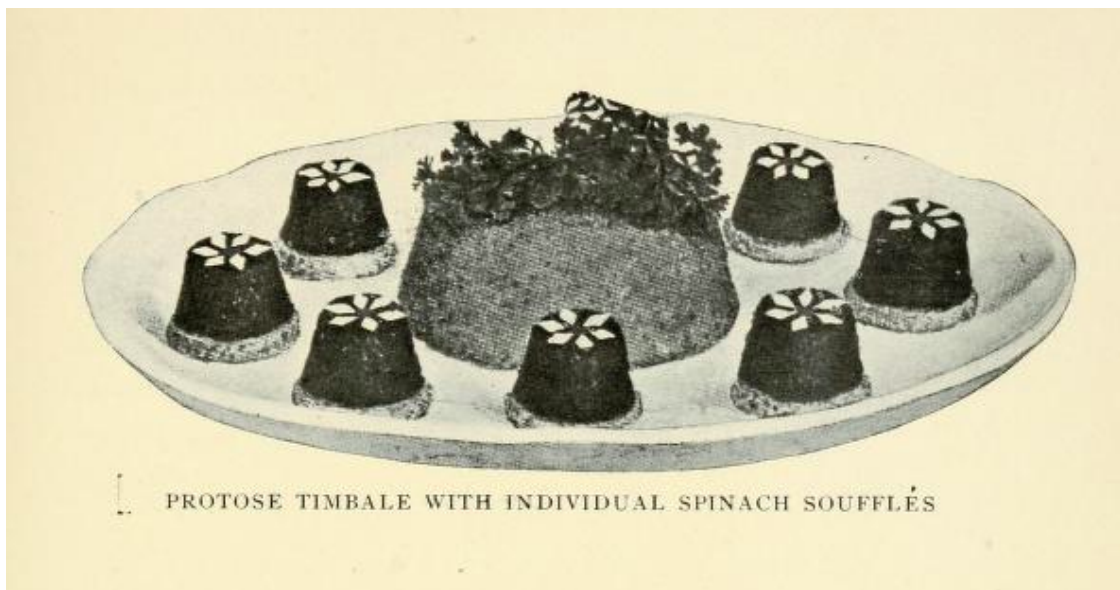


Protose achieved global popularity. This photograph of a can of Protose is held in the Alexander Turnbull Library in Wellington, New Zealand.²⁴²

The cookbooks of Nichols and Allinson also brimmed with these types of testimonials, which differed from the testimonials of the earlier vegetarian movement in that they extolled specific proprietary foods rather than the vegetarian diet in general. Through marketing like this, meat substitutes like Protose and Nuttolene became household names. They also began appearing as ingredients in cookbooks not distributed by the San itself. In Black's *A Manual of Vegetarian Cookery*—organised as a series of suggested menus with accompanying recipes—the main courses of several menus feature proprietary meat substitutes such as 'Meatose Pie', 'Protose Cottage Pie with Brown Gravy', 'Protose Risssoles', and 'Fried Protose with Tomatoes'.²⁴³

²⁴² Display of Sanitarium Grape Juice and Protose. [ca 1880s-1920s] The Press (Newspaper) :Negatives. Ref: 1/1-017582-G. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand. /records/29945766, <https://tiaki.natlib.govt.nz/#details=ecatalogue.693382>, accessed May 19, 2021.

²⁴³ Black, *Manual of Vegetarian*, Menus 1, 4, 7 and 19 (no page numbers given).



Protose in action in Evora Bucknum Perkins' *The Laurel Health Cookery*²⁴⁴

One key to successful presentation of meat substitutes was surrounding them with the usual vegetables and garnishes that would accompany their animal-based counterparts. However, Protose also sometimes turned up as an auxiliary ingredient in vegetable-based recipes. As well as many main dishes revolving around Protose, Fulton's *Substitutes for Flesh Foods* contains a multitude of inventive ways to incorporate it as a minor ingredient in dishes like 'Beet and Potato Salad' or 'Artichoke Soup'.²⁴⁵

Not all authors wholeheartedly embraced proprietary foods. However, the idea of a neat and tidy product that could substitute for meat was attractive from both a nutritional and culinary standpoint, and exerted an influence even on cookbooks that did not incorporate commercial proprietary foods in their recipes. In *The Laurel Health Cookery*, published in 1911, rather than relying on name-brand products Evora Bucknum Perkins gave her readers detailed instructions for creating homemade analogues. Her recipe for 'trumese' compares it with commercially available 'protose', 'nutfada' and 'nut cero'; similarly, she tells the readers that proprietary forms of her 'nuttese' are known as 'nuttolene', 'nutmete', 'nutcysa' and

²⁴⁴ Evora Bucknum Perkins, *The Laurel Health Cookery: A Collection of Practical Suggestions and Recipes for the Preparation of Non-Flesh Foods in Palatable and Attractive Ways* (Melrose, Mass.: Laurel, 1911), <http://archive.org/details/laurelhealthcook00perk>, 154, 175.

²⁴⁵ Even in 'Nut and Vegetable Stew', which already contains Nuttolene, the last line of the recipe mentions without giving a rationale that 'a little protose might also be added'. Fulton, *Substitutes for Flesh*, 27, 59, 81.

‘nut loaf’.²⁴⁶ Cooks could therefore feel free either to use commercial proprietary foods or create their own meat substitutes for use in the recipes if such products were unaffordable, unavailable, or simply unwanted.

The fact that Perkins was able to give several examples of each type of proprietary food testifies to how ubiquitous and well-known such products had become. However, while she gave readers the option to use these products or not, other authors avoided mentioning branded meat substitutes altogether, relying instead on the application of similar principles; i.e. combining nuts and grains in dishes meant to resemble meat. Sharpe, for instance, includes a section on ‘nut dishes’ in her *Golden Rule Cook Book*. Most of these are in ‘loaf’ form, and intended as dramatic meatless main courses. ‘Michaelmas Loaf’, for instance, combines walnuts, peanuts, bread crumbs and eggs with herbs; a Christmas variation adds cranberry sauce.²⁴⁷ Similarly, in her cookbook dedicated to meatless cookery, Rorer includes no mention of proprietary foods, which is interesting, given the fact that a few years before she had begun serving as an official advocate for Cottolene, a proprietary substitute for lard.²⁴⁸ Cottolene combined cottonseed oil with a small amount of beef suet, and therefore would have been inappropriate to include in a cookbook aimed at vegetarians.²⁴⁹ However, as a noted food authority, Rorer made it her business to follow new product trends, and would certainly have been aware of the existence of other proprietary foods. Their absolute omission from her cookbook could be construed as evidence that she found little value in the focus placed upon them by many vegetarians.²⁵⁰ Instead, Rorer emphasised vegetables, with her first two subtitles describing ‘vegetables to take the place of meat’ and ‘vegetables with meat value’.²⁵¹ However, her definition was expansive, and included the ingredients from which meat substitutes were typically made. In a page devoted to categorising vegetables, she defines ‘Nitrogenous Vegetables and Meat Substitutes’, as ‘The cereals, Dried peas, Peanuts, Dried beans, Lentils, Chick peas’, and certain nuts, along with eggs and milk.²⁵² Although she devotes much of the cookbook to more traditional vegetable preparations, her section entitled ‘In the Place of Meat’ contains

²⁴⁶ Perkins, *Laurel Health*, 181.

²⁴⁷ Sharpe, *Golden Age*, 178.

²⁴⁸ Berndt, ‘Science Strikes’, 57.

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 46.

²⁵⁰ An alternative explanation might be that she declined to promote such foods unless paid to do so.

²⁵¹ Rorer, *Vegetable Cookery*, title page.

²⁵² *Ibid.*, 38. For more on the nutritional implications of the term ‘nitrogenous’, see Chapter 3.

many recipes reminiscent of Perkins' loafs, or the types of dishes that could be constructed with proprietary meat substances, including such delicacies as 'Mock Veal Roast' (peanuts, lentils and breadcrumbs), 'Mock Ham' (kidney beans, walnuts, pecans and almonds), and even 'Mock Fish' (hominy grits, nuts and eggs).²⁵³

A step beyond ignoring proprietary foods was explicitly excluding them; Miles does exactly this in his *New Cookery of Unproprietary Foods*. However, his reason for excluding such foods is not that he finds no value in them. In fact, strangely, he devotes most of his preface to the advantages of proprietary foods, admitting that his many other writings on cookery rely heavily on such foods.²⁵⁴ From what the reader can gather in a few scattered asides, his sole reason for creating a cookbook devoted to 'unproprietary' foods was the expense of buying these branded foods, although only in a passage near the end of the book does he state plainly that proprietary foods 'are in every case more expensive' than alternatives.²⁵⁵ He sees a need for a vegetarian cookbook focusing on more affordable ingredients, since 'cookery, as usually taught to the poor people . . . is wasteful cookery, extravagant cookery, and not healthy cookery either'.²⁵⁶ His *Unproprietary* cookbook, then, constitutes at least partially another attempt to educate the poor on how to attain a cheap, plain and nutritious diet, this time by avoiding not only meat but also trendy vegetarian substitutes.

Conclusion: Commercialising and Expanding

While vegetarians promoted the adoption of a plant-based diet as a personal moral choice, branches of the movement sought to take it in more practical directions, whether as an inexpensive solution for prisons and workhouses or by appealing to the disadvantaged themselves to exercise economy by eating more vegetables. These arguments for plant-based diets appropriated an older strand of thinking on domestic economy, and in the process at least theoretically expanded the audience of vegetarianism to include the wide swath of society living on a subsistence level. However, vegetarians were also aware of the rising middle class, and sought to exploit fads like home gardening and stay on the cutting edge of

²⁵³ Rorer, *Vegetable Cookery*, 43, 46, 47.

²⁵⁴ Miles, *Unproprietary Foods*, 5.

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 126.

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 9.

advances in home food preservation. These activities exemplified the ideal of feminine care for the household and—like the original plain-living vegetarianism—were connected to the virtues of economy and thrift.

One notable challenge to the expansion of vegetarianism was convincing audiences beyond committed adherents to radically change how they selected and prepared their food. Therefore, members of the movement sought ways to render these dietary modifications easier by making vegetarian dishes as similar as possible to their meat equivalents and innovating easily prepared foods. Ella Kellogg's meat substitutes were phenomenally successful, largely because they incorporated both of these strategies. Products like Protose echoed the texture and taste of meat, and could be served almost straight out of the can, accompanied by the trimmings customers used with similar meat-based dishes. And mail-order catalogues made proprietary meat substitutes available in locations far beyond the reach of scattered local vegetarian organisations and chapters. The success of entrepreneurs like the Kelloggs brought awareness of vegetarianism to more people, while also making it easier for them to adopt, creating a virtuous circle of creative commerce and ideological success.



Advertisement for Protose from 1960²⁵⁷

²⁵⁷ 'Protose: The First and Finest Vegetable Entree Ever Developed', *Lake Union Herald*, Vol. 52, No. 49, 6 December 1960, Adventist Archives, <https://documents.adventistarchives.org/Periodicals/LUH/LUH19601206-V52-49.pdf>, accessed May 13, 2021.

However, this emphasis on making money also put the new vegetarian cuisine out of reach for the disadvantaged, at least partially counteracting the economic benefits of adopting a diet focused on vegetables, and edging the movement farther away from its plain-living roots, and in the direction of appeal to the growing middle class. This move towards the evolving mainstream had long-term implications. A hundred years after the founding of the San, Protose was still being marketed, and it stands at the beginning of a long line of proprietary meat substitutes in use by vegetarians today.



CHAPTER 3: HEALTH, STRENGTH AND HEGEMONY

The Physical Side of Eating Vegetables

'In vegetables, grain, eggs, fruits, and nuts we have stored-up life; under proper conditions each will produce life. These are genuine foods, and will build strong bodies for those who eat them. The gladiators of ancient times, noted for their great strength, lived principally on barley bread. The animals which are the strongest, swiftest, and of greatest endurance, are herbivorous. In modern times, in tests of strength and endurance, where vegetarians and men who live on a mixed diet have been pitted against each other, the former have made the best records. Meat, acting as a stimulant, gives temporary strength only; for lasting strength one must go to the vegetable kingdom.'

- Mary Ann Heard

Chapter 3

Health, Strength and Hegemony

Although proprietary foods and other substitutions were one way to signal that vegetables could take the place of meat, many cookbook authors preferred instead to utilise increasingly sophisticated scientific analyses of the nutritive properties of different foods. Notaker describes a trend near the end of the nineteenth century towards including nutritional concepts in cookbooks, especially in the new genres of school cookbooks and home economics textbooks.²⁵⁸ Thanks in part to the efforts of entrepreneurs like the Kelloggs, vegetarianism was also going mainstream, at least to an extent; Young observes that ‘even the 1888 edition of Mrs. Beeton’s Book of Household Management contained a new chapter on vegetarian recipes’.²⁵⁹ Vegetables remain a cornerstone of twenty-first-century healthy eating; yet the health-related arguments for plant-based eating in late nineteenth and early twentieth-century cookbooks may be paradoxically the most incomprehensible to the modern reader. The reason? Vitamins, discovered in 1912, play no part in the nutritional discourse of the time, which instead revolves around period terms like ‘nitrogenous’, ‘hygienic’, or ‘vegetable salts’. Therefore, to help make sense of late nineteenth and early twentieth-century scientific and medical opinions on vegetables, along with the cookbooks I examined a selection of relevant articles from contemporary medical journals.

It is worthwhile to note that while many authors were up-to-date on their science, others relied on much older chemical and nutritional theories, either because they did not have access to the latest findings or perhaps because the old science better suited their arguments. Cookbooks could also be unrevised reprints or based on older books. Both the older and newer science sometimes included racist and white supremacist arguments. Many prominent members of the vegetarian movement were eugenicists, and one way of promoting or denigrating a particular diet at the time was to associate it with more or less ‘evolved’ cultures. However, dietary eugenics was just as popular among doctors and researchers against

²⁵⁸ Notaker, *History of Cookbooks*, 211.

²⁵⁹ Young, ‘Eating Serial’, 76.

vegetarianism. Therefore, nutrition became a battlefield where views on evolution, cultural hegemony, health, disease and the suitability of different foodstuffs were weaponised by all sides.

Better Living through Chemistry

Simply knowing the date when a certain scientific discovery was made reveals little about how it affected society or everyday life. Sometimes it took decades or even centuries for new discoveries to become part of common knowledge and practice. In a community as ideologically motivated as nineteenth-century vegetarianism, nutritional arguments could be repeated over and over for many years if they came from authoritative sources within the movement. For instance, most of Simpson's 1852 introduction to *Vegetarian Cookery* was reprinted verbatim in the 1891 edition that finally bore his name, including his assertion (made comical by the forty-year gap) that 'it is only within the last fifteen years that correct impressions as to what constitutes the true nutritive qualities of food have been arrived at'.²⁶⁰

The nutritional portions of the text are dense and difficult to follow; nevertheless, it is worth looking at his arguments because they articulate foundational beliefs of the vegetarian movement. Although scientific study of diet had moved on since the studies he cites, many of his core arguments from anatomy, physiology and chemistry would be repeated by fellow cookbook authors for decades to come. These correspondences suggest that even when authors claimed to base their nutritional recommendations on the latest science, they existed in an environment that continued to rely on older concepts as well. Therefore, in this nutritional section I will introduce each topic with reference to the 1891 *Vegetarian Cookery*, and then look at what other cookbook authors—as well as contemporary medical journals—have to say.²⁶¹

Nitrogenous Foods and the Almighty Protein

One of the biggest problems for vegetarians during the nineteenth century was the nutritional field's extreme emphasis on protein, which persisted for decades,

²⁶⁰ Brotherton, *Vegetarian Cookery*, 1891, 7; Brotherton, *Vegetarian Cookery*, 1852, xiv.

²⁶¹ Ibid., 1-3.

sometimes in the face of clear evidence to the contrary.²⁶² Vegetarian thinkers therefore were at pains to argue that the vegetable kingdom could be relied on for protein just as well or better than the animal kingdom. The most recent scientific evidence Simpson musters comes from what he calls the ‘Liebig school of chemistry’, which he describes as positing three ‘principles of food’: ‘flesh-forming’, ‘heat-forming’ and ‘ash’. The idea was that the ‘flesh-forming’ nutrients provided the raw materials for the body to build tissues, the ‘heat-forming’ nutrients generated energy, and the ‘ash’ contained necessary minerals. With a little massaging by the accompanying text, the charts he provides show that all these elements are more balanced and abundant in plant foods than meat, which he takes as an indication that vegetarianism is nutritionally preferable.²⁶³ As far as can be deduced from his opaque reasoning and cherry-picked quotations, Simpson appears to be referring largely to German chemist Justus Freiherr von Liebig’s popular 1842 work *Organic Chemistry in its Application to Physiology and Pathology*, where he argued that protein, the ‘flesh-forming’ component, was the ultimate nutrient, and existed in comparable forms in both animal and vegetable foods.²⁶⁴

Providing nutritional charts in a cookbook served many purposes, and was common in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.²⁶⁵ A chart could demonstrate concepts, make explanatory text more comprehensible, and describe the nutritional components of a large variety of foodstuffs in a small space. Readers could use the charts to easily compose meals and menus following a specific nutritional system. However, for vegetarians one of the main functions of such charts was persuasion; statistics showing that vegetables provided the same nutrition as meat allowed them to convince prospective adherents. It also gave them ammunition to answer challenges from their friends, neighbours and doctors. These charts, sometimes drawn straight from the work of scientists—as Simpson’s were from the Liebniz research—lent an added veneer of authority and learning that simple text did not.

²⁶² Kenneth J. Carpenter, ‘A Short History of Nutritional Science: Part 1 (1785-1885).’, *The Journal of Nutrition* 133, no. 3 (2003): 638–45, 642.

²⁶³ Brotherton, *Vegetarian Cookery*, 1891, 7-8.

²⁶⁴ Carpenter, ‘Short History, Part 1’, 641.

²⁶⁵ Alice Ross, ‘Health and Diet in 19th-Century America: A Food Historian’s Point of View’, *Historical Archaeology* 27, no. 2 (1993): 42–56, 46.

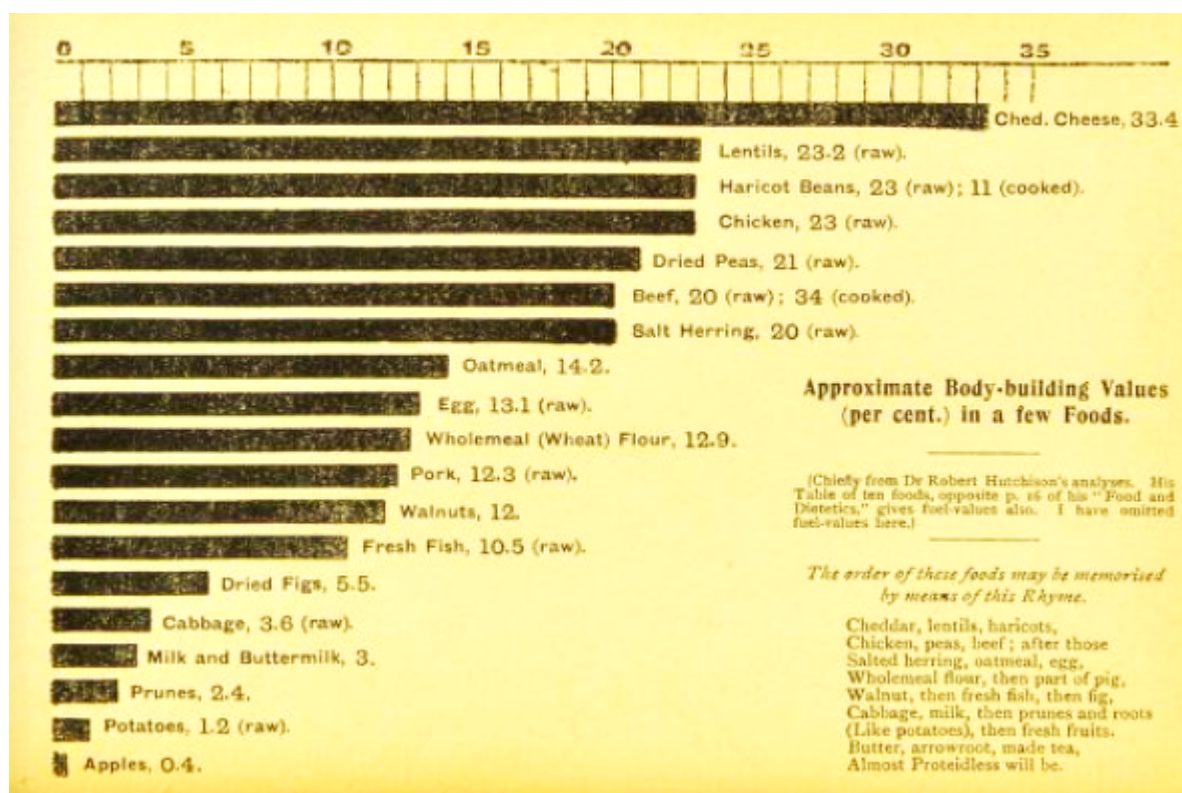


Chart provided by Eustace Miles in *The New Cookery of Unproprietary Foods*. It shows relative 'body-building' values in different plant and animal foods. His aim was to guard against what he saw as a common pitfall for the vegetarian diet: 'it too often has starch as its basis rather than the body-building elements or proteid'.²⁶⁶

Protein continued to be viewed as a primary nutrient in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but the role of carbohydrates, fats, and mysterious trace nutrients known as 'salts' began to complicate the picture. In a 1907 lecture, W. D. Halliburton, a professor of physiology at King's College, London, put forth the broad outlines of 'The Diet of To-Day', explaining how the nutritive properties of foods should be understood.²⁶⁷ In a time before television and radio, lectures were a popular way for the public to learn about the latest advances in science.²⁶⁸ This lecture seems geared towards a non-specialist audience; the published version appeared in *The Hospital*, a publication aimed not at chemists or physiologists, but practising doctors. Halliburton attached 'principle importance' to three types of

²⁶⁶ Miles, *Unproprietary Foods*, 49, 54.

²⁶⁷ W. D. Halliburton, M.D., F.R.C.P., F.R.S., 'The Diet of To-Day', *The Hospital* 41, no. 1062 (19 January 1907): 283–84. The article is a summary of his lecture, 'specially reported for *The Hospital*', a medical journal geared towards contemporary hospital practice. The lecture was delivered on January 9, 1907 at the Incorporated Institute of Hygiene in London.

²⁶⁸ Shishko, 'Epistemologies', 94; A. Ross, *Health and Diet*, 45–46.

nutrients: proteids, carbohydrates and fats. The distinctive nutrient for him—as for others of his day—was ‘proteids or albuminous substances, found in eggs, meat, or milk’, which contained ‘the important element nitrogen’. Nitrogen was paramount because it was considered the main building block for bodily tissues: Liebig’s ‘flesh-forming’ principle. Nevertheless, Halliburton pointed out that these ‘nitrogenous foods’ also provided energy, blurring the sharp distinction drawn by Simpson between ‘flesh-forming’ and ‘heat-forming’ foods.²⁶⁹

Partially as a response to the increasing influence of vegetarians, who (as Miles had warned) often lived on a more carbohydrate-based diet than was considered healthy, controversy raged in the medical community over the primacy of protein. Halliburton references a study done by Yale professor Russell Chittendon, who experimented first on himself and then on other groups with a relatively low protein diet.²⁷⁰ The favourable results, published in 1904, caused a sensation and accompanying backlash within the medical community, since the received wisdom was that ‘the almost universal consumption of high protein diets in prosperous countries’ was proof enough that such a diet was beneficial.²⁷¹ Halliburton acknowledges the importance of the ‘non-nitrogenous’ carbohydrates and fats, but rejects Chittendon’s advocacy of lower protein diets with the pronouncement that ‘the minimum diet is not necessarily the optimum’.²⁷² In fact, he specifically calls out vegetarians, prognosticating that ‘vegetarianism, if carried too far, may produce greater horrors even than the Chicago stockyards’.²⁷³

While Halliburton’s statement might seem extreme, its repetition in *The Hospital* reflected a growing concern among doctors about patients who adopted restrictive diets of various sorts without medical advice. The following year *The Hospital* would publish an article lamenting a ‘deplorable tendency towards faddism in matters dietetic’, and giving doctors advice for dealing with a patient who ‘raves against meat’ or ‘insists upon having nuts even with his afternoon tea’.²⁷⁴ Halliburton

²⁶⁹ Halliburton, ‘Diet of Today’, 283.

²⁷⁰ Ibid.; Kenneth J. Carpenter, ‘A Short History of Nutritional Science: Part 2 (1885-1912)’, *The Journal of Nutrition* 133, no. 4 (2003): 975–84, 975. Chittendon’s work was often invoked in vegetarian health debates of the time.

²⁷¹ Carpenter, ‘Short History, Part 2’, 975, 985.

²⁷² Halliburton, ‘Diet of Today’, 283.

²⁷³ Ibid., 284. The horrors of the Chicago stockyards were a favourite topic of vegetarians, and had been made infamous to the general public a few years earlier in Upton Sinclair’s exposé novel *The Jungle*. Sphrintzen, *Vegetarian Crusade*, 150-151.

²⁷⁴ Anonymous, ‘Diet and Diet Fads’, *The Hospital* 45, no. 1160 (14 November 1908): 173.

rejected extremes in diet, and considered vegetarians extremists. His conclusion supported the majority view that the ‘small amount of nitrogenous material eaten by vegetarians’—and those whose economic status precluded access to meat—lowered their resistance to disease, as well as harming children and other vulnerable groups.²⁷⁵

This belief, shared by chemists and physiologists, about the importance of ‘nitrogenous foods’ trickled into cookbooks, where vegetable-advocating authors became preoccupied with highlighting the nitrogen content of various plant-based foodstuffs. Fortunately for the vegetarian cause, mainstream researchers believed that plant-based protein was identical to that in meat, allowing advocates to credibly suggest substitutions.²⁷⁶ For example, like other important figures in the home economics movement, Rorer put a high priority on nutritional education, and strove to translate the latest science into understandable language for her readers; accordingly, one of the stated aims of her *Vegetable Cookery* was to educate readers on vegetables ‘with meat value’.²⁷⁷ In her forward, she explains the nutritional properties of vegetables by dividing them into four groups. Her first group comprises the ‘muscle-making or nitrogenous’ vegetables, which she says ‘have meat value and take the place of meat’.²⁷⁸ Like Simpson, many authors included tables showing the proportion of ‘nitrogenous matter’ vs. other substances in different plant foods. Such visual demonstrations of data provided a useful resource for attempting to convince others of the virtues of a vegetable diet. It was these self-empowered patients that so exasperated the unknown author of ‘Diets and Diet Fads’, who describes them as having ‘a smattering of science’ and being ‘expert at misapplications’, always ready to counter with an authority of their own when lectured on ‘matters dietetic’.²⁷⁹

‘Salts’, Soups and Scurvy

As evidenced in Halliburton’s lecture, carbohydrates and fats tended to be lumped together as ‘non-nitrogenous’ foods, providing energy to the body, but not helping to

²⁷⁵ Halliburton, ‘Diet of Today’, 283.

²⁷⁶ Carpenter, ‘Short History, Part 2’, 975.

²⁷⁷ Rorer, *Vegetable Cookery*, title page.

²⁷⁸ Ibid., 7. Similarly, Nicholson argues that ‘pease, beans, lentils, and cheese, are richer in nitrogenous matters than flesh’, and therefore from a nutritional standpoint can be considered ‘equal or superior’ to meat. Nicholson, *Jubilee*, 78.

²⁷⁹ Anonymous, ‘Diet and Diet Fads’, 173.

form its tissues. Rorer in fact says nothing at all about the nutritional properties of 'the fatty group', but advises that 'vegetables containing starch', or the carbohydrate group 'are heat- and energy-producers, hence must be used in larger quantities than the muscle-building foods'.²⁸⁰ Her final group of vegetables she describes as 'by far the largest of the four', and containing 'the green, succulent vegetables'. Rorer attributes their value mostly to being cleaners and digestive aids, with a glancing mention of 'mineral matter'.²⁸¹ This short, unexplained reference to what Simpson had designated the 'ash' content of vegetables and other authors called 'salts', 'saline matter' or 'mineral salts' was typical of cookbooks during this time.

In her 1905 *Household Cookery*, published in New York, London and Bombay, home economics teacher E. Crichton advises readers that 'vegetables should form part of our daily food, as they contain salts or mineral foods, which are essential for health'.²⁸² Like Crichton, most authors spoke of these mineral salts in relatively vague terms, but that did not stop those who focused particularly on vegetables from suggesting ways to ingest these mysterious salts more abundantly. In Chapter two, Wythes told thrifty cooks to save the water in which they had cooked their vegetables for stock. Beard gives another rationale for using this water in soups and gravies: 'it contains much of the valuable saline matter which is needful to the maintenance of health'.²⁸³ In fact, according to him, the 'scientific cook' would preferentially 'conserve these salts in the vegetables' themselves, rather than allowing them to leach out into cooking water; using the cooking water in recipes was a second choice.²⁸⁴ Heard, on the other hand, argues in *The Hygeia cook book* that cooking water is a perfect way to ingest 'the salts of the vegetable', because when rendered in water 'these salts are in a form readily assimilated by man'.²⁸⁵ Behnke and Henslowe posit in *The Broadlands cookery-book* that 'the nutritive value of most vegetables is low', their 'chief value' lying in the 'important organic salts they contain', which they likewise locate in the water in which these vegetables have been gently cooked.²⁸⁶ Like many of the authors in Chapter 1, they abhor the idea of boiling vegetables to death and

²⁸⁰ Rorer, *Vegetable Cookery*, 7, 38.

²⁸¹ Ibid.

²⁸² E. Crichton, *Household Cookery*. (London ; New York [etc] : Longmans, Green, and Co., 1905), <http://archive.org/details/householdcookery00cric>, 22.

²⁸³ Beard, *Hygienic and Humane*, 125.

²⁸⁴ Ibid.

²⁸⁵ Heard, *Hygeia*, v.

²⁸⁶ Kate Behnke and E. Colin Henslowe, *The Broadlands Cookery-Book : A Comprehensive Guide to the Principles and Practice of Food Reform* (G. Bell, 1910), <http://archive.org/details/b21524415>, 23.

then discarding the cooking water, but in their case it is not on culinary or aesthetic grounds, but because the practise is 'unscientific, wasteful, and a perversion of natural chemistry'.²⁸⁷

IN 100 PARTS.					
	Carbo- hydrates.	Nitrog- enous Matter.	Hydro- carbonate Matter.	Saline Matter.	Water.
Beans.....	55.86	30.8	2.0	3.65	8.40
White haricots.....	55.7	25.5	2.8	3.2	9.9
Dried peas.....	58.7	23.8	2.1	2.1	8.3
Lentils.....	56.0	25.2	2.6	2.3	11.5
Potatoes.....	21.9	2.50	0.11	1.26	74.0
Black truffles.....	16.0	8.775	0.560	2.070	72.0
Mushrooms.....	3.0	4.680	0.396	0.458	91.010
Carrots.....	14.5	1.3	0.2	1.0	83.0
Sea-kale.....	2.8	2.4	.....	(?) 3.0	93.3
Turnips.....	7.2	1.1	.....	0.6	91.0
Cabbage.....	5.8	2.0	0.5	0.7	91.0
Garden beet.....	13.5	.4	.....	(?) 1.0	82.2
Tomato.....	6.0	1.4	.....	(?) .8	89.8
Sweet potato.....	26.25	1.50	0.30	2.60	67.50
Water-cress.....	3.2	1.7	.....	(?) .7	93.1
Arrowroot.....	82.0	.....	.....	.....	18.0
Dry southern wheat.	67.112	22.75	2.61	3.02	.....
Dry common wheat..	77.05	15.25	1.95	2.75	.....
Oat-meal.....	63.8	12.6	5.6	3.0	15.0
Barley-meal.....	74.3	6.3	2.4	2.0	15.0
Rye-meal.....	73.2	8.0	2.0	1.8	15.0
Dry maize.....	71.55	12.50	8.80	1.25	.....
Dry rice.....	89.65	7.55	0.80	0.90	.....
Buckwheat.....	64.90	13.10	3.0	2.50	13.0
Quinoa-meal.....	56.80	20.0	5.0	(?) 1.0	15.0
Dhoorra-meal.....	74.0	9.0	2.6	2.3	.....
Dried figs.....	65.9	6.1	0.9	2.3	17.5
Dates.....	65.3	6.6	0.2	1.6	20.8
Bananas.....	(?) 19.0	4.820	0.632	0.791	73.900
Walnuts (peeled).....	8.9	12.5	31.6	(?) 1.7	44.5
Filberts.....	11.1	8.4	28.5	(?) 1.5	48.0
Ground-nuts (peeled)	11.7	24.5	50.0	(?) 1.8	7.5
Cocoa-nut.....	8.1	5.5	35.9	(?) 1.0	46.6
Fresh chestnuts (peeled)	42.7	3.0	2.5	(?) 1.8	49.2
Locust bean.....	67.9	7.1	1.1	(?) 2.9	14.6
Cocoa-nibs.....	11.10	21.20	50.0	3.0	12.0
Chocolate.....					

The analyses are those of Fresenius, Letheby, Pavy, Church, and others.
From "The Perfect Way in Diet."

11

A table from Henrietta Latham Dwight's *Golden Age Cookbook*, showing proportions of nutrients in various plant foods. The facing page shows a similar table with values for animal foods.²⁸⁸

²⁸⁷ Behnke and Henslowe, *Broadlands*, 24.

²⁸⁸ Dwight, *Golden Age*, 11.

While interest in the preservation of these cryptic nutrients was widespread, characteristic of most accounts was a certain vagueness over what these vital ‘salts’ were composed of, or why they were important. Even Halliburton mentions ‘vegetable salts’ only in passing, before moving on to nutrients ‘of principal importance’.²⁸⁹ But a few authors are more specific. In her 1897 *Handbook of Housekeeping for Small Incomes*, Florence Stacpoole includes only a small vegetable section; however, the title comes with a footnote advising that ‘vegetables are chiefly valuable on account of the potash and other salts which they contain’.²⁹⁰ Maria Parloa, the influential founder of the Boston cooking school, informs readers in her 1898 *Home Economics* that the importance of green vegetables lay in the ‘phosphates and other salts and acids which they contain, and which the human body demands’.²⁹¹ The only author who gives an explanation of what these salts might do is Nichols, who mentions that the lime and phosphates contained in vegetables are ‘bone and teeth forming’.²⁹²

These ideas on trace nutrients were probably gathered from various working theories of chemists and nutritionists, but aside from the universal advice to save cooking water, most cookbook authors preferred to focus on the better-known issue of nitrogen.²⁹³ Dietetic chemists agreed; a study where researchers measured the daily dietary intake of a vegetarian leads with discussion on his astonishingly low nitrogen intake (one third of the accepted norm); they were unbothered that his total vegetable consumption during the two weeks of the study was limited to beans or peas and potatoes on only four out of fourteen days, along with a single cucumber for the entire two weeks.²⁹⁴ The only real exception to this general unrecognition of the nutritional properties of green vegetables was in their acknowledged usage for prevention of scurvy in prisons. However, the mechanism remained mysterious, and the fact that potatoes, green vegetables and fresh fruit juice all protected against

²⁸⁹ Halliburton, ‘Diet of Today’, 283.

²⁹⁰ Florence Stacpoole, *Handbook of Housekeeping for Small Incomes* (London : Walter Scott, 1897), <http://archive.org/details/handbookofhousek00stac>, 174.

²⁹¹ Maria Parloa, *Home Economics : A Guide to Household Management, Including the Proper Treatment of the Materials Entering into the Construction and Furnishing of the House* (New York: New York : The Century co., 1898), <http://archive.org/details/homeeconomicsgui00parl>, 246.

²⁹² Nichols, *Penny Vegetarian*, 1888, 8.

²⁹³ For example, various theories on the importance of phosphorus were being floated at the time. See Kenneth J. Carpenter, ‘A Short History of Nutritional Science: Part 3 (1912–1944)’, *The Journal of Nutrition* 133, no. 10 (1 October 2003): 3023–32, 3024.

²⁹⁴ William Gordon Little and Charles E. Harris, ‘A Study of Metabolism in a Healthy Vegetarian’, *Biochemical Journal* 2, no. 5–6 (1907): 230–39, 230–34.

scurvy interested few people beyond prison wardens and ship captains.²⁹⁵ Since vague allusions to mysterious salts exerted understandably little influence on popular imagination, until vitamins entered the public consciousness during the second decade of the nineteenth century, cookbook authors had to find other reasons to recommend non-nitrogenous vegetables, especially those that also lacked many 'heat-forming' carbohydrates.

A Question of Digestion

As one such benefit, a modern dietician might invoke the fiber content of green vegetables, and its role in digestive function. Indeed, Rorer considered these types of vegetables 'just as necessary to the balanced ration' as other food groups due to their function to 'keep up the peristaltic action of the intestines'.²⁹⁶ Few cookbook authors employed such precise scientific terminology. However, many recognised the role of vegetables in adding 'necessary bulk to the food', whether the function of such bulk was to dilute foods of more 'concentrated' forms or ease digestion.²⁹⁷ In a six-hundred-page tome entitled *Health in the Household, or, Hygienic Cookery*, for example, Susanna Way Dodds, M.D. explains that 'there must be certain indigestible materials supplied to the intestinal canal, else the bowels, having little to do, would lose their natural tone, and shrivel up, as it were, from mere inactivity'.²⁹⁸

'Dyspepsia', the nineteenth century term for indigestion, was a common topic addressed by cookbook authors, who expressed a range of opinions on the digestibility of various foodstuffs.²⁹⁹ Simpson's argument for the digestibility of vegetables was based on a bizarre early nineteenth-century study of questionable ethics, during which for ten years Dr. William Beaumont observed the processes of digestion firsthand in a young man with a fistula in his stomach caused by a gunshot

²⁹⁵ Captain Cook's success in circumventing the globe in 1768-1780 was partially attributable to his insistence that the crew regularly consume green vegetables, but tragically, sailors would continue to die of scurvy for many decades afterwards. A. Ross, *Health and Diet*, 43. Astonishingly, researchers sometimes even denied the efficacy of traditional antiscorbutics in favour of arguments that once again favoured protein, despite all evidence to the contrary. Carpenter, 'Short History, Part 1', 644. As for cookbook authors, the only one who even mentioned the action of green vegetables against scurvy was Nichols, perhaps because his poorer readers might be in real danger of this disease of deficiency during lean economic times. Nichols, *Penny Vegetarian*, 1888, 17.

²⁹⁶ Rorer, *Vegetable Cookery*, 7.

²⁹⁷ Fulton, *Substitutes for Flesh*, 117.

²⁹⁸ Susanna Way Dodds, *Health in the Household, or, Hygienic Cookery* (New York: Fowler & Wells Co., 1891), <http://archive.org/details/b21528421>, 38.

²⁹⁹ A. Ross, *Health and Diet*, 43.

wound.³⁰⁰ The resulting charts (reproduced in *Vegetarian Cookery*) show how much time is required for the digestion of various foods; Simpson's takeaway is that vegetables require a shorter digestion time, and are therefore more suited to human consumption.³⁰¹ Beaumont published his findings in 1833, so they were already nearly twenty years old when included in Simpson's 1852 edition, and approaching seventy by the time they reappeared without change in 1891.³⁰² By the early twentieth century the mainstream view was the opposite of Simpson's. Halliburton reminded his audience that 'the easy digestibility of the proteids of animal origin render them superior to those from the vegetable world'.³⁰³

In some cases cookbook authors resorted to theories of digestion that can only be described as fanciful. Heard pronounced indigestion one of the 'chief ailments', along with 'its kindred ills, especially flatulence'.³⁰⁴ However, her explanation for its cause was that meat and fish 'are on the way to disintegration; in other words, they are dead . . . we cannot get life from death', whereas 'in vegetables, grain, eggs, fruits, and nuts we have stored-up life; under proper conditions each will produce life'.³⁰⁵ It was not very far from eccentric reasonings like these to Wachtmeister and Davis's theosophist explanation that 'astral bodies feed on the subtle emanations of the foods supplying nutriment to the physical encasement', or even Simpson's cryptic one-liner—inserted seemingly at random in the middle of a chemical explanation—that 'every thought of the mind, as well as every act of the body, produces changes in the human system'.³⁰⁶

Although they did not necessarily agree about which foods were more digestible, authors of this period were remarkably united in the belief that digestion was to some degree individual. Miles went so far as to admit that some of the recipes in his cookbook 'are likely to be indigestible for some people', alluding to the necessity for some 'unpleasant experiments' on the way to finding one's personal perfect diet.³⁰⁷ Even *The Hospital* agreed; after enumerating various harmful diet

³⁰⁰ Carpenter, 'Short History, Part 1', 643; Brotherton, *Vegetarian Cookery*, 1891, 13.

³⁰¹ Brotherton, *Vegetarian Cookery*, 13-16.

³⁰² Carpenter, 'Short History, Part 1', 645. However, it is worth noting that he was still being invoked, not only by vegetarians, but in more mainstream publications; the anonymous author of 'Diet and Diet Fads brought up Beaumont's observations to bolster an argument that overeating was the most common cause of dyspepsia.

³⁰³ Halliburton, 'Diet of Today', 284.

³⁰⁴ Heard, *Hygeia*, iii.

³⁰⁵ Ibid., iv.

³⁰⁶ Wachtmeister and Davis, *Practical Vegetarian*, 3; Brotherton, *Vegetarian Cookery*, 1891, 7.

³⁰⁷ Miles, *Unproprietary Foods*, 8.

fads it cautioned doctors not to be too hasty in laying down strict rules for patients' diets. Although 'scientific regulation is a grand thing,' the author concluded, 'in medicine a cut-and-dried regimen is not always the best'.³⁰⁸

... THE ...
Stomach, Its Disorders and
How to Cure Them.

BY J. H. KELLOGG, M. D.

Superintendent of the Battle Creek (Mich.) Sanitarium, Member of the British and American Associations for the Advancement of Science, the American Microscopical Society, the Society of Hygiene of France, Author of the Home Hand-Book of Domestic Hygiene and Rational Medicine, etc.



A brief, practical treatise on the most common of human ailments, in which the causes and cure of the functional disorders of digestion are dealt with in a clear and practical manner.

Advertisement for John Kellogg's book on digestion in one of Ella Kellogg's cookbooks³⁰⁹

Health, Disease, and Hygienic Cookery

The only health-related argument in *Vegetarian Cookery* updated between 1852 and 1891 reflected a concern that much of the meat consumed in Great Britain

³⁰⁸ Anonymous, 'Diet and Diet Fads', 173-174.

³⁰⁹ Kellogg, *Every-day dishes*, 15.

came from diseased animals; the 1891 edition made the same arguments, but added as evidence an account of a pair of prominent 1864 Parliamentary bills on cattle with contagious diseases.³¹⁰ The subject of livestock disease formed a common argument against the consumption of meat. Dodds, for instance, warns readers that if they knew ‘the actual statistics’ in ‘all their loathsome details, of scurvy in swine, of ulcerated livers, of deaths from trichinae, of beef discolored from venous blood, and often from semi-putrefaction’ they would feel more inclined towards vegetables.³¹¹ Lurid descriptions of this sort offered a compelling case for vegetarianism. Wachtmeister and Davis put it succinctly: ‘flesh meat contains the germs of diseases to which animals are subject’; that is, livestock were diseased, and therefore caused disease.³¹² Cattle generally came in at the top of the list, but authors also warned readers away from swine, poultry, sheep and even fish.³¹³ The litany of diseases was equally alarming: tuberculosis, cancer, scrofula, scurvy; if the affliction was fearsome, it could surely be caught from eating an afflicted animal.³¹⁴ Singled out for particular ire was what a cookbook-quoted excerpt from *Food, Home and Garden* described as ‘the thick, venous blood, a substance so poisonous that it will cause blood poisoning whenever it comes in contact with the arterial blood of the body’.³¹⁵ Parasites were also a concern. Sharpe quoted a Kosher meat inspector to the effect that ‘one-third of all the meat sold to Christian families is tainted by parasitical disease’.³¹⁶ Other authors enumerated specific parasites and contaminants such as trichinosis, tapeworm, infusoria and animalculae.³¹⁷

These alarms over the impurities and dangers of meat were part of a growing awareness that food sources could not always be trusted. Ever-expanding railway lines and faster trains meant that food could be transported far from its origins. Advances in refrigeration, canning and other preservation techniques enabled foods to be packaged and consumed in seasons and forms that were unfamiliar.

³¹⁰ Brotherton, *Vegetarian Cookery*, 1891, 18-24.

³¹¹ Dodds, *Health in the Household*, 4.

³¹² Wachtmeister and Davis, *Practical Vegetarian*, 183.

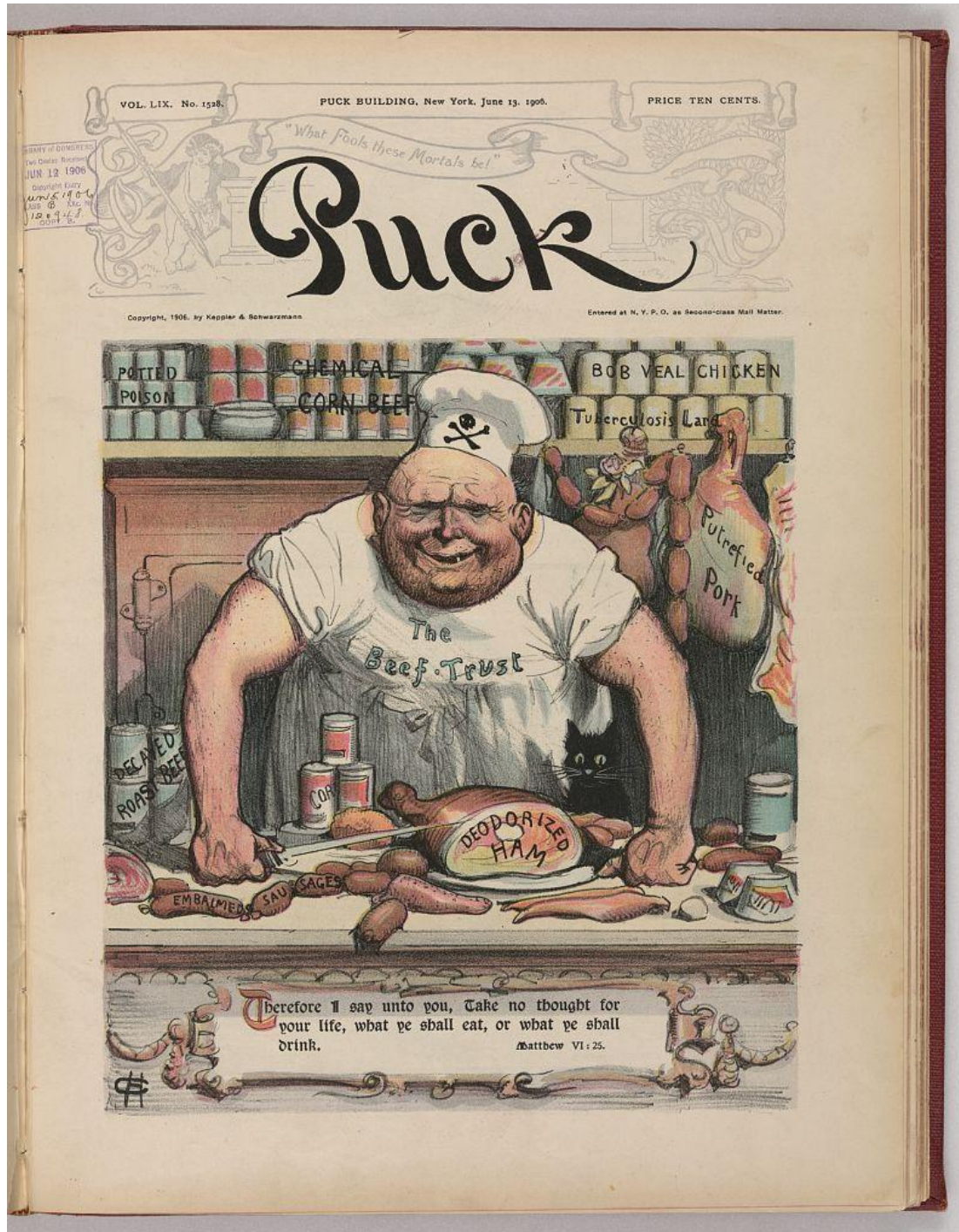
³¹³ Fulton, *Substitutes for Flesh*, 3-4; Nichols, *Penny Vegetarian*, 1888, 6.

³¹⁴ Nichols, *Penny Vegetarian*, 1888, 6. The reference to scurvy as a disease that could be caught from eating scorbutic animals underscores the ongoing confusion over its causes, as well as the alacrity of vegetarians in seizing on arguments furthering their movement.

³¹⁵ Wachtmeister and Davis, *Practical Vegetarian*, 183. *Food, Home and Garden* was the publication of the Vegetarian Society of American (see Shprintzen, *Vegetarian Crusade*, 50).

³¹⁶ Sharpe, *Golden Rule*, 23.

³¹⁷ Nicols, *Penny Vegetarian*, 1888, 6; Dodds, *Health in the Household*, 4. Infusoria and animalculae were general period terms for bacteria and protozoa.



Cover of the satirical New York magazine *Puck* from June 13, 1906, one week before the *Pure Food and Drug Act* passed Congress, and two weeks before President Theodore Roosevelt signed it into law.³¹⁸

³¹⁸ Carl Hassmann. [The meat market], *Puck*, June 13, 1906, photomechanical print: offset, color, Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Illus. in AP101.P7 1906 (Case X) [P&P], accessed April 15, 2021, <https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2011645899/>. Credit for bringing this illustration to my attention goes to Adam Mack, *Sensing Chicago Noisemakers, Strikebreakers, and Muckrakers*, Studies in Sensory History (Urbana, Chicago ; Chicago, Illinois ; Springfield, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 2015), 73.

Increasingly industrialised production of meat, canned goods, and processed foods of every description meant new and exciting culinary adventures. However, these developments also gave companies more opportunities to adulterate products with artificial fillers, flavourings, colourings, and chemicals. Like the 1860s beef laws in Britain, the 1906 United States *Pure Food and Drug Act* directly addressed public concern over notorious revelations like the ‘embalmed beef’ scandal of 1898.³¹⁹ While laws provided safeguards for the consumer, the intense media coverage attending the battles over their passage was a constant reminder of the dangers industrially-produced foods—and particularly meat—could pose to human health. The responsibility for ensuring the family’s well-being logically rested with the person who selected and prepared the food they consumed. Therefore, it is no surprise that cookbook authors during this period place great emphasis on what they refer to as ‘hygiene’, a concept Notaker calls one of the ‘dominant bourgeois ideals of the nineteenth century’.³²⁰ He connects cleanliness and tidiness to social class, a sentiment echoed by Veit, who describes how dietary reformers ‘eagerly praised one family that, under their influence, began setting their table with a white tablecloth, in contrast to other “slovenly and shiftless” families’.³²¹

However, for the scientifically-minded cookbook authors of the time, hygiene meant much more than being clean and tidy. It encompassed everything having to do with health: nutrition, cleanliness and general good practise in the kitchen, whether that meant using the correct culinary tools or cooking one’s vegetables for the proper length of time. ‘The question is often asked, “What *is* this hygienic diet?”’, begins the introduction to Dodds’ *Hygienic Cookery*; the answer soon emerges that for her, a hygienic diet is above all a vegetarian one.³²² Cowen and Beaty-Pownall likewise remind readers that ‘hygienically, a great deal may be said for an occasional abstention from the too exclusively flesh diet we are in this country apt to consider essential to our well being’.³²³ Beyond employing the proper dietary constituents, ‘hygienic cookery’ involved knowledge of cooking techniques, and when and how to employ each one. Fulton begins his cookbook with a section on ‘the Hygiene of

³¹⁹ In 1898 ‘the U.S. Army accused meatpackers of providing supposedly “fresh” canned beef that was heavily dosed with chemicals to cover its rottenness, sickening the troops who ate it’. Veit, *Gilded Age*, 15.

³²⁰ Notaker, *History of Cookbooks*, 295.

³²¹ Ibid.; Veit, *Gilded Age*, 39.

³²² Dodds, *Health in the Household*, 11.

³²³ Cowen and Beaty-Pownall, *Meals without Meat* 2.

Cooking' that contains no mention of cleanliness; instead it explains techniques like boiling, steaming, broiling, etc., along with the chemical principles behind them.³²⁴

This emphasis on theory combined with practise was characteristic of home economics education and associated cookbooks.³²⁵ Perkins listed as one of her qualifications for writing a cookbook the fact that she was a 'Pioneer in Hygienic Vegetarian Restaurant Work'.³²⁶ She began the book with a similar section on proper kitchen practises.³²⁷



Hygiene class at the Hampton Institute in Virginia in 1899 or 1900. On the blackboard is a list of foods appropriate for various meals; to the left is a chart with 'average composition of some common foods'.³²⁸

³²⁴ Fulton, *Substitutes for Flesh*, 9-12.

³²⁵ Shishko, 'Epistemologies', 90-95.

³²⁶ Perkins, *Laurel Health*, title page.

³²⁷ *Ibid.*, 11. Perkins included some suggestions that now seem alarming, such as the advice that 'a book of asbestos sheets costing ten cents is invaluable. Each sheet can be used again and again for laying over bread, cake and other foods in the oven'.

³²⁸ Frances Benjamin Johnston. Class in hygiene [Hampton Institute, Hampton, Va.], 1899 or 1900, photographic print, Frances Benjamin Johnston Collection (Library of Congress), LOT 11051-4 [P&P;], <https://www.loc.gov/resource/cph.3b38691/>, accessed April 15, 2021.

Of course, hygiene included its current meaning as well. Behnke and Henslowe admonished readers to observe ‘scrupulous cleanliness’ in their own kitchens, but also to take note of the horrifying way in which ‘fruit and vegetables, besides being exposed in the shops, are placed in crates and baskets outside the shop-fronts right down to the pavement, where they are not only unprotected against dirt, but against the attentions of every passing dog’.³²⁹ At its root, the nineteenth-century concept of hygiene was an articulation of the idea that one’s own health and well-being—even the composition of one’s body—was in the hands of the individual. Electing vegetables over meat was only the first step, and had to be followed by strict cleanliness, organisation and scientific cooking methodologies. A plant-based diet was more than a moral or economic choice; it meant using the latest chemical and dietetic science to not only escape disease but also literally build one’s body out of purer, more wholesome constituents.

Physical Culture and the ‘Simply Fed Irishman’

Body-building in another sense was on the minds of vegetarians and others when the physical culture movement took hold around the turn of the twentieth century.³³⁰ As office work became common for the middle classes, so did concern that such a lifestyle was causing a general tendency towards weakness and ill-health.³³¹ This anxiety over physical degeneration prompted increased public interest in counteractive measures like diet, as well as demonstrations and contests of physical strength. Among the most famous of a new brand of physical culture celebrities was Bernarr Macfadden, who toured England and America in the late eighteen-nineties, showing off his physique and lecturing on the importance of diet and exercise for strength and healthy living.³³² Within a few years Macfadden had become vegetarian, publishing a cookbook and opening a chain of popular restaurants.³³³ Other cookbook authors likewise touted feats of strength and endurance fueled by vegetarianism, although not necessarily their own. Nichols

³²⁹ Behnke and Henslowe, *Broadlands*, 27.

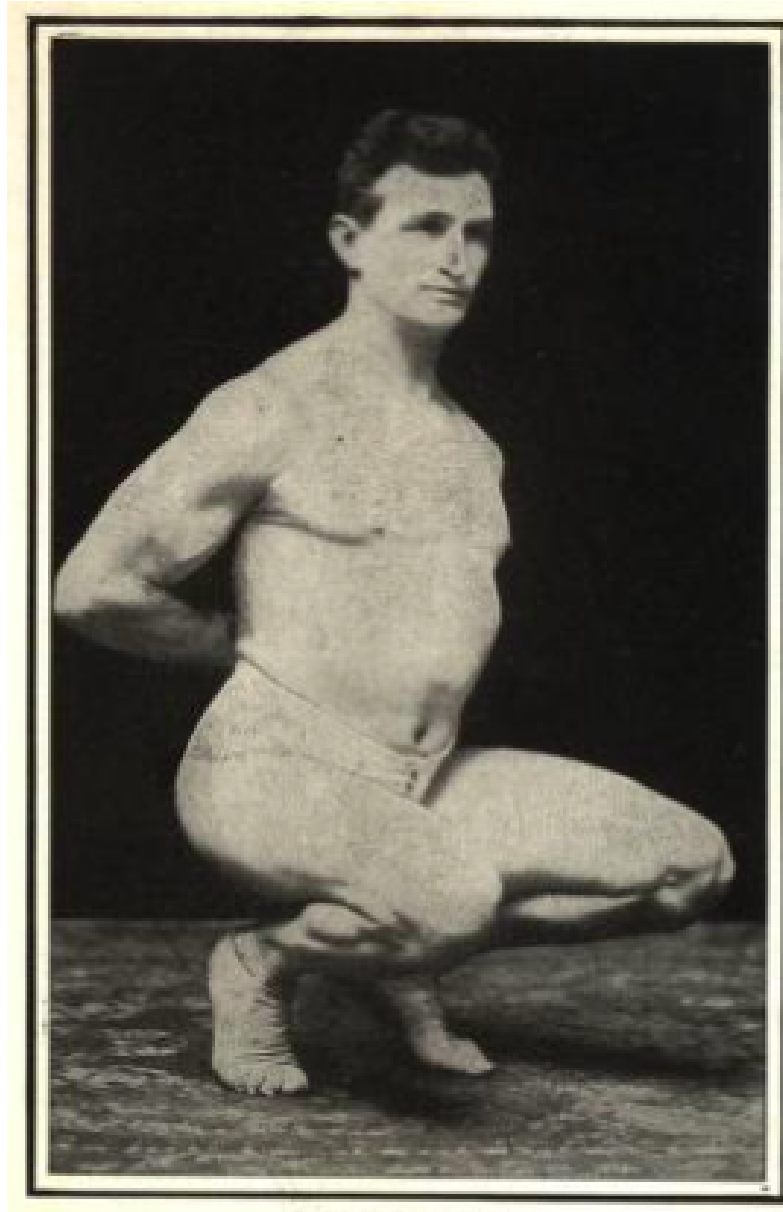
³³⁰ Shprintzen, *Vegetarian Crusade*, 183.

³³¹ This trend towards office work, with its attendant increase in both income and anxiety over health, was one of the factors that influenced the great popularity of the San, and these workers (and their spouses) formed the bulk of its clientele. Shprintzen, *Vegetarian Crusade*, 141-142.

³³² *Ibid.*, 187.

³³³ *Ibid.*, 190.

describes how a friend 'made a pedestrian tour of six weeks, walking over a large part of England, eating nothing but apples'.³³⁴ Dwight quotes an 1898 cablegram to the New York 'Sun' describing an endurance race in Germany; in this case the vegetarian diet proved so superior that 'not till one hour after the last vegetarian did the first meat-eater appear, completely exhausted. He was the only one'.³³⁵



Bernarr Macfadden demonstrating an exercise meant to 'cleanse and stimulate the alimentary canal' in his 1915 book *Vitality Supreme*.³³⁶

³³⁴ Nichols, *Penny Vegetarian*, 1891, 12.

³³⁵ Dwight, *Golden Age*, 8.

³³⁶ Bernarr Macfadden, *Vitality Supreme* (New York City: Physical Culture Publishing Co., 1915), <http://archive.org/details/B-001-014-062>, 64.

For authors unable to promote their cookbooks based on their own or friends' physical prowess, the growing admiration of physical strength and endurance nevertheless brought new opportunities to advocate for a vegetarian diet. Demographic groups known for working in occupations that required these attributes became newly interesting to vegetarians eager to promote the strengthening qualities of vegetables. These arguments included a class component, and typically revolved around relative capacity to do manual labour. They also often relied on racial or cultural stereotypes, and sweeping generalisations about the diets of entire countries or continents. Again, this was a trend anticipated by Simpson. As well as singling out different species of animals as exemplary vegetarians, he referenced the diets of various populations of humans. He compares, for instance the 'more carnivorous Englishman' with the 'frugal and abstemious Scotsman' and the 'simply fed Irishman', nourished on 'the simplest of all vegetable products'.³³⁷ His figures demonstrated that the diet of the Irish rendered them superior in height, weight and strength, a similar conclusion to Nichols.³³⁸ According to Simpson, the better-off among Anglophones might do well to emulate the 'peasantry and hard workers of all the countries of Europe', whom he characterises as essentially vegetarian. To these European vegetarians he adds 'the higher castes of Hindoos, the Burmese, the Chinese, the Japanese, the inhabitants of the East Indian Archipelago' and 'South American miners'.³³⁹ He makes repeated reference to labourers in poor countries, emphasising the heavy loads they were able to carry due to their largely vegetarian diet.

Other authors made the same arguments as Simpson, usually with reference to similar groups of workers. 'Isobel', the pseudonymous author of the 1906 volume on *Vegetarian Cookery* from Pearson's Household Handbooks, bolsters her argument for relying solely on 'the products of the vegetable world' by invoking 'the sturdiness of the Scotch labourers, who live almost exclusively on oatmeal, and of the Chinese coolies and the Japanese, whose staple food is rice'.³⁴⁰ Sharpe presented as evidence that 'vegetarians are not physical weaklings' not only

³³⁷ Brotherton, *Vegetarian Cookery*, 1891, 34-35. He quotes from Smith's *Wealth of Nations* to the effect that the Irish peasantry and others who did the hardest labour were vegetarian, and the 'strongest men in the British dominions'. But the figures come from experiments conducted by an Edinburgh doctor.

³³⁸ Brotherton, *Vegetarian Cookery*, 1891, 34-35.

³³⁹ *Ibid.*, 32, 34.

³⁴⁰ 'Isobel', *Vegetarian Cookery*, Pearson's Handbooks for the Household (London: C. Arthur Pearson, 1906), <http://archive.org/details/b21538207>, 11.

Japanese wrestlers, but also 'Indian regiments of the British army showing the most endurance'.³⁴¹ Nichols insisted that 'from earliest times the labour of the world has been done by people living on the simplest vegetable food', going on to name several large, vague groups, from 'our ancestors' to 'the great populations of India and China' and 'hard working peasantry all over Europe'.³⁴²

Nor did one have to travel to distant countries or confine oneself to reading vegetarian authors to view the salubrious effects of the vegetarian diet. Heard describes 'tests of strength and endurance' where when pitted against meat-eaters, vegetarians had 'made the best records'.³⁴³ In the vegetable section of their domestic economy textbook, Bidder & Battely assert that 'the Vegetarians of this country are pretty decidedly superior in endurance to those who feed on animal tissues'.³⁴⁴ That such a statement would appear in a textbook unaffiliated with the vegetarian movement (and by no means lacking in instructions for preparing meat) shows how much the dramatic demonstrations of physical culture propagandists like Macfadden were helping vegetarian ideas go mainstream.

For these authors, the physiological benefits of vegetarianism went far beyond prevention of disease or good nutrition. Eating more vegetables was a way to counter the ill effects of working an office job, allowing the middle class to retain their lifestyle and attendant economic benefits while acquiring the strength and endurance attributed to labourers the world over. The benefits of eating vegetables showed up in the ease with which the individual vegetarians held up as physical specimens accomplished feats of strength or endurance. And they were reinforced by the almost universal (if often economically-enforced) vegetarianism of the manual workers of the world. A plant-heavy diet was suitable, according to these cookbooks, not only for the poor, but for all those wishing to improve their bodies and increase their physical prowess. Boosted by public sports competitions and the newly admired feats of labourers from various ethnic groups, they made the case that 'for lasting strength one must go to the vegetable kingdom'.³⁴⁵

³⁴¹ Sharpe, *Golden Rule*, 16.

³⁴² Nichols, *Penny Vegetarian*, 1891, 7.

³⁴³ Heard, *Hygeia*, iv.

³⁴⁴ Marion Greenwood Bidder and Florence Baddeley, *Domestic Economy in Theory and Practice: A Text-Book for Teachers and Students in Training* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1901), http://archive.org/details/domesticeconomyi00bidd_0, 246.

³⁴⁵ Heard, *Hygeia*, iv.

From Linnaeus to Darwin

Meanwhile, other vegetarians were making arguments for eating vegetables that relied instead on the 'racial inferiority' of some of these same groups. Since Sylvester Graham and the early days of the vegetarian movement, one favoured way of making the vegetarian case had been by analogy to the animal kingdom. Vegetarian thinkers argued that human physiology resembled that of herbivorous animals more than carnivores. Simpson's anatomical and physiological arguments were based on comparisons between human and animal teeth and digestive tracts, citing statements from eighteenth and early nineteenth-century natural scientists like Linnaeus and Cuvier that 'fruits, roots, and the succulent parts of vegetables, appear to be the natural food of man.'³⁴⁶ Dwight quoted Graham himself, asserting that 'comparative anatomy proves that man is naturally a frugivorous animal, formed to subsist upon fruits, seeds, and farinaceous vegetables'.³⁴⁷

Taking it a step further, some authors linked diet and taxonomy to a hierarchical scale of animals. They argued that herbivorous animals were superior in every way to carnivores. Nichols rhapsodises that vegetarian animals are 'the noblest, strongest, most agile and most beautiful and useful', listing more than a dozen examples, including the squirrel, gazelle, zebra and hippopotamus.³⁴⁸ In this vein, Sharpe likewise lauds 'those famous Vegetarians who march around the globe doing the work carnivorous man is too weak to do, — the horse, the ox, the camel, and the elephant'.³⁴⁹ The implication is obvious: readers could likewise become the noblest, strongest, most agile, beautiful and useful—the best in every way—were they to adopt a vegetarian diet.

³⁴⁶ Behnke and Henslowe, *Broadlands*, 5.

³⁴⁷ Dwight, *Golden Age*, 7. Most cookbook authors focused on comparing human teeth and digestive systems to those of animals; however, some went further to examining limbs or even skin. Behnke and Henslowe go into considerable depth on each of several correspondences. They point out that 'the frugivora and herbivora grind or masticate the food', resulting in an 'indispensable preliminary digestive process' involving the same salivary enzymes as humans, and absent in carnivores. The length of the 'alimentary canal' and structure of the stomach also indicated a similarity between humans and frugivores. Even perspiration was evidence to them that humans were 'not intended to live on flesh, but on vegetables, or rather on fruits'. Finally, the 'absolute dissimilarity' between human and carnivore teeth was so obvious 'as to render comment superfluous'. (See Behnke and Henslowe, *Broadlands*, 6-7.)

³⁴⁸ Nichols, *Penny Vegetarian*, 1888, 16; Heard similarly argues that the animals that are 'strongest, swiftest, and of greatest endurance' are all herbivorous. Heard, *Hygeia*, iv.

³⁴⁹ Sharpe, *Golden Rule*, 16.

Tarts may be made deep or shallow, and with white crusts or brown. A little of Dr. Nichols' Bread-raiser and a few drops of oil or butter make a better crust than one flaky with grease. A good tender pastry can be made as digestible as bread.



Human skull and teeth, showing the highest type of the frugivorous, or fruit-eating animal.

The value of fruits as food is shown in the table on page 7, but few people realize the fact that man is really a fruit-eating animal, as shown by his hands, his teeth, and his natural tastes and appetites. A nation in Africa lives entirely on dates three months of every year. A man "sitting under his own vine and fig-tree" can live perfectly well upon their products. Figs contain the same proportion of nutriment as bread, and far more than any kind of flesh meat. We know men who have lived a long time, doing hard work, entirely on fruit. A friend of ours made a pedestrian tour of six weeks, walking over a large part of England, eating nothing but apples. On the last day he walked thirty miles and was none the worse, but rather the better for his experiment. Many persons supposed to be affected with incurable diseases have got well on a diet of fruit, or, as in the grape cure, on bread and fruit.



Skull and teeth of a carnivorous, or flesh-eating animal.

Some people have a prejudice against cookery, and especially the cooking of fruit. We look upon it as using a little artificial, or rather stored up, sunshine to make it riper.

Illustrations comparing a 'frugivorous' human skull with that of a carnivore from *Dr. Nichol's Penny Vegetarian Cookery*.³⁵⁰

From these moral rankings of different animal species based on their eating habits, it was no great leap for vegetarians to apply similar judgements to what they saw as different races of humans. For nineteenth-century vegetarians, the moral, intellectual and physical aspects of diet were inseparable. Shprintzen quotes an 1895 pamphlet on the subject, which asserts that 'vegetarianism is the ethical corollary of evolution. It is simply the expansion of ethics to suit the biological

³⁵⁰ Nichols, *Penny Vegetarian*, 1888, 10.

revelations of Charles Darwin'.³⁵¹ It is difficult to overstate the influence of various permutations of Darwinian thought on social scientists and movements during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, especially following the 1871 publication of *The Descent of Man*. Hawkins quotes the hyperbolic but indicative observation of a German enthusiast in 1875 that 'from the first appearance of the Darwinian doctrine, every moderately logical thinker must have regarded man as similarly modifiable'.³⁵² Vegetarians of the time certainly believed that the human species was modifiable through diet, although they did not always agree on the particular mechanisms. In an eccentric manifestation of dialogue with Darwinian ideas, for example, Young describes journalist and vegetarian advocate Beatrice Lindsay 'emphasising the underlying unity of all life rather than the competition for survival, articulating what she saw as the moral dimensions of evolution'.³⁵³ From her point of view, rather than evolving towards some future ideal, humans needed to return to their 'primitive food'.³⁵⁴ Along similar lines, some cookbook authors invoked Darwin to further bolster arguments vegetarians had been propounding since the early nineteenth century, as in Sharpe's claim that Darwin had made the typical vegetarian point about the disparity between human and carnivore teeth.³⁵⁵

Phrenology, which predated Darwin's writings but inspired similar strands of eugenicist thought, had also been associated with early vegetarianism. Noted phrenologist Orson Fowler was a member of the American Vegetarian Society, and for early vegetarians, examining skull shape and size was as logical as analysing the teeth and digestive system; conclusions could be drawn not only about suitable diets, but also intelligence and moral worth.³⁵⁶ These vegetarian connections to eugenics only strengthened as the movement grew during the opening decade of the twentieth century. From at least 1897, John Kellogg had begun to align himself with the eugenics movement.³⁵⁷ In 1914 he founded the Race Betterment Foundation, and in his inaugural address at its first meeting 'called for the establishment of a "new human race" unencumbered by the pitfalls of flesh-based diets, alcohol, and

³⁵¹ Shprintzen, *Vegetarian Crusade*, 147.

³⁵² Mike Hawkins, *Social Darwinism in European and American Thought, 1860-1945 Nature as Model and Nature as Threat* (Cambridge [England]; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 61.

³⁵³ Young, 'Serial Eating', 69.

³⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 70.

³⁵⁵ Sharpe, *Golden Rule*, 21.

³⁵⁶ Shprintzen, *Vegetarian Crusade*, 80.

³⁵⁷ The prominent founder of the 'San', discussed in Chapter 2.

drug abuse'.³⁵⁸ Similarly, although composer Richard Wagner was not a vegetarian himself, he used his fame to encourage those within his sphere to adopt the diet. He was against vivisection—in connection with which he claimed that all doctors were Jewish—and believed that 'meat-eating had corrupted the human race'.³⁵⁹ Analogous expressions of dietary eugenics appeared in cookbooks; Nicholson, for example, describes how urban populations subsisting on meat 'grow smaller and darker', with a 'tendency to revert to an earlier and lowlier ethnic form'.³⁶⁰

The 1893 International Vegetarian Congress gave vegetarians what they viewed as a global stage on which to articulate their positions on ideas like these. Speakers at the Congress situated vegetarianism at the intersection of American Manifest Destiny and scientifically-mediated agricultural revolution, lauding how the replacement of traditional Native American ways of life with modern farming methods enabled the land to feed a much larger population.³⁶¹ For them, the apotheosis of this colonial and scientific expansion could come only when the adoption of vegetarianism made it possible to feed even more people on the same land. In similar language to Nicholson's cookbook, medical doctor and women's suffragist Rachel Cain described vegetarians as 'highly evolved', and dismissed flesh foods as a 'remnant of humanity's "savage" roots'.³⁶²

Vegetarians were not the only ones painting a picture of human evolution through diet. The concept of an evolutionary ladder where dietary changes prompted upward movement towards a more perfect human body was at the core of Dr. Harry Campbell's address on 'The Therapeutics of Diet' at the annual *Conversazione* of the Royal Society in 1908.³⁶³ Campbell was a London physician, but also wrote extensively on topics linking diet to anthropology and evolution.³⁶⁴ In his talk he draws the attention of his audience to a diagram showing a ladder with fifteen rungs, where each rung 'indicates one additional unit of brain substance'.³⁶⁵

³⁵⁸ Shprintzen, *Vegetarian Crusade*, 144.

³⁵⁹ Spencer, *A History*, 264.

³⁶⁰ Nicholson, *Jubilee*, 74.

³⁶¹ Shprintzen, *Vegetarian Crusade*, 157.

³⁶² *Ibid.*

³⁶³ Harry Campbell, 'The Therapeutics of Diet', *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Medicine* 1, no. Ther Pharmacol Sect (1908): 45–48.

³⁶⁴ See, for example, Harry Campbell, 'The Diet of the Precibiculturists', *British Medical Journal* 2, no. 2322 (1 July 1905): 40.

³⁶⁵ Campbell, 'Therapeutics of Diet', 45. This diagram does not survive; however, a presumably similar example (reproduced on the following page) accompanies an article on 'The Evolution of Man's Diet', which Campbell had published in *The Lancet* a few years earlier.

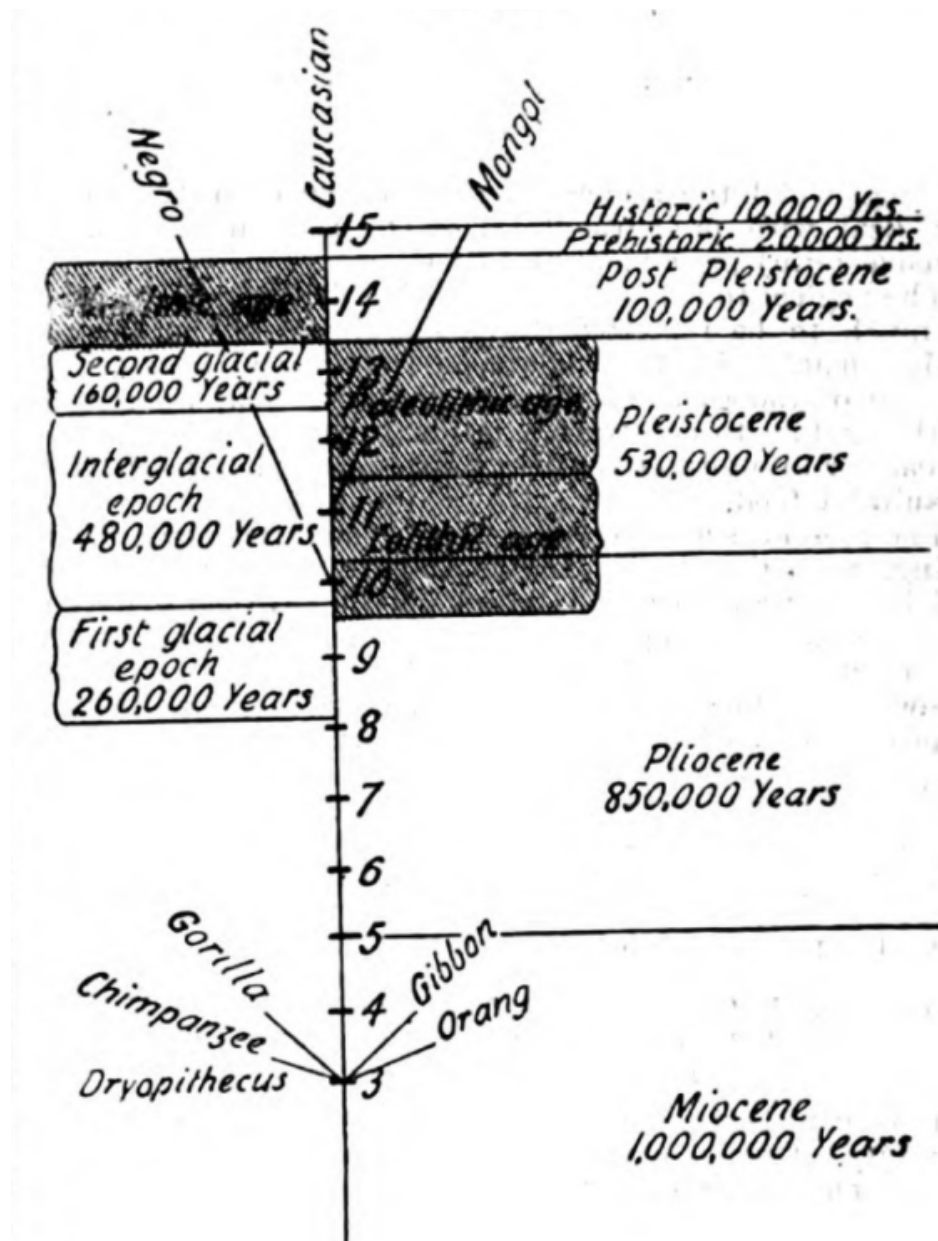


Illustration of Campbell's evolutionary ladder from a 1904 article in *The Lancet*, presumably similar to the diagram from his 1908 address at the Royal Society Conversazione. It shows different human races branching off during prehistory, with 'Caucasian' as the most evolved race.³⁶⁶

Campbell agreed with the vegetarian Darwinists that diet was a key driver of human evolution; however, he argued that 'man has evolved from the ape to be "the roof and crown of things" on a diet which is largely carnivorous', and that it was therefore 'idle to contend that animal food is necessarily harmful to him'.³⁶⁷ He did

³⁶⁶ Harry Campbell, M.D., 'The Evolution of Man's Diet', *The Lancet* 2, no. 4228 (10 September 1904): 781–84, 782.

³⁶⁷ Campbell, 'Therapeutics of Diet', 47.

concede that 'our simian ancestor was frugivorous'.³⁶⁸ However, for him, eating meat was an evolutionary step forward, rather than back; as the mental advance of humans moved them up the ladder, they 'became more and more carnivorous, less and less vegetarian', at least up to a point.³⁶⁹ For Campbell the carnivorous stage peaked 'at the end of the early hunting stage', by which time he asserted that humans were eating more meat than plants.³⁷⁰ On the other hand, his estimate for the diet composition of 'the average European', whom he placed at the pinnacle, on the fifteenth rung, was 'two-thirds vegetable to one-third animal food'.³⁷¹ Interestingly, he could imagine a future 'twentieth rung' of the ladder, upon which the 'super-man' might once again become a virtual vegetarian; however, for him this was a distant possible future, and one to which the present (white) human body was not adapted, and races down the ladder even less.³⁷² Thus, for Campbell the correlation of vegetable consumption with increased 'brain substance' came out as a sort of inverse bell curve.

Campbell's evolutionary ladder is significant not only for its linkage of diet to evolution, but also because it represents human evolution not only temporally, but also racially; that is, in his system some of the humans lower on the ladder represented races other than white Europeans. Rungs 10 through 15 depict different human races, with 'Negro' on rung 10, and 'Mongol' on rung 11.³⁷³ While at first glance it might seem at odds with vegetarian claims, this evolutionary framework provided fuel for vegetarian cookbook authors eager to provide scientific 'proof' that vegetarianism could improve the human body and mind. Although he presented humanity's distant 'simian' ancestors as originally frugivorous, in Campbell's system the 'less-evolved Negro' had eaten the most meat of all, with the percentage of vegetable food gradually increasing from that point, and even a potential future evolution to a vegetarian 'super-man'. This accorded perfectly with Nicholson's claim

³⁶⁸ Campbell, 'Therapeutics of Diet', 46.

³⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 47.

³⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 46.

³⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 45, 47.

³⁷² *Ibid.*, 46. Although he did not advocate vegetarianism for white Europeans in their current state of evolution, Campbell appears to have been sympathetic to some of the more utopian ideals of the vegetarian movement. He described the appearance of this hypothetical vegetarian super-man as 'a consummation devoutly to be wished, because the consumption of animal food has many gruesome accompaniments'.

³⁷³ Campbell, 'Evolution of Diet', 784. His footnoted rationale? That 'the fact that Mongoloid idiots are not infrequent among Caucasian peoples while Negroid idiots never occur' was evidence the 'negro offshoot' had diverged first.

that meat-eaters reverted to a darker, earlier, lowlier form of humans; for her, there was a danger that white Europeans could literally eat themselves into racial inferiority.

So pervasive was the idea of racial inferiority that it served axiomatically on both sides of the dietary debate. A lengthy letter from botanist Edgar T. Wherry, published in *Science* magazine in 1913, interrogated the loaded question: 'Does a low-protein diet produce racial inferiority?'³⁷⁴ The author described a well-known argument against a low-protein (often vegetarian) diet: that 'races practising it' exhibited 'some points of physical inferiority or lack energy, aggressiveness or courage'. His characterisation of the typical vegetarian defense speaks volumes about the extent to which racism permeated the argument: according to Wherry, their usual response was 'that the diet is the result, rather than the cause, of such racial characteristics'.³⁷⁵ Wherry's suggested alternative explanations included new understanding of the role of polished rice, and an assertion that 80% of inhabitants on the Indian subcontinent were infested with hookworm.³⁷⁶ Racial inferiority was a given; different sides simply located its causes in elements congenial to their own arguments.

A step further was Nichols' equation in his cookbook of Western flesh-eaters with cannibals.³⁷⁷ For him, meat-eating, like cannibalism, was something advanced humans were meant to leave behind. Along with Nicholson, he drew a sharp distinction between 'civilised' and 'evolved' vegetarians, and flesh-eaters, who were so unevolved they might as well be cannibals and savages. On the surface, this was not so different from Simpson's pre-Darwinian assertion that arguing against vegetarianism because the 'Esquimaux' could not adopt it was the equivalent of 'reasoning from savage or depraved courses of life'.³⁷⁸ What was new was the idea

³⁷⁴ Edgar T. Wherry, 'Does a Low-Protein Diet Produce Racial Inferiority?', *Science*. 37, 963 (1913): 1–1070, <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/97357>, 908.

³⁷⁵ Wherry, 'Racial Inferiority', 908.

³⁷⁶ Studies of beriberi and its connection to polished rice, as well as other deficiency diseases such as pellagra, rickets and scurvy, were ongoing during the period; however, no significant breakthroughs had yet been made, which left the causes of these diseases open for speculation. Racial inferiority formed a frequent part of scientific discourse on these topics. See many examples throughout Carpenter, 'Short History', Parts 2 and 3.

³⁷⁷ Nichols, *Penny Vegetarian*, 1891, 22. His examples are Fijians, New Zealanders and Africans, groups Campbell would have placed on the tenth rung.

³⁷⁸ Brotherton, *Vegetarian Cookery*, 1891, 41. The 'Eskimos' often appeared in anti-vegetarian arguments as proof that vegetarianism was essentially unworkable as a worldwide diet plan because there were groups that would be unable to adopt it due to environmental factors.

that vegetarians could go well beyond improvement of individual health to create an elevated race of humans, perfected through diet.

Conclusion: Science for the Cause—But which Cause?

Vegetarianism's rhetorical footprint was large for a relatively small movement. As well as being influenced by debates within the wider culture around topics ranging from nutrition to physical culture to 'racial inferiority', it also left its own stamp on these debates. While home economics, chemistry, dietetics and eugenics, for instance, were not part of the vegetarian movement, strains of thought within them form segments of a complete picture of its overlapping spheres of influence. Cookbooks reveal many of these overlapping spheres because their authors were the ones translating scientific concepts into concrete practices readers could implement to improve themselves and their families. Because vegetarian authors had a stake in the domestic practices of their readers, they mobilised scientific findings to support their moral, religious or political beliefs, and presented them in ways that would empower their readers to defend and spread those beliefs. At least in theory, vegetarianism was a way to influence whole populations based on individual actions in the kitchen and at the table. Vegetable eating could transform the bodies, not only of individuals, but also of the race, the nation, even the species. However, arguments for the superiority of an imagined white race that could transcend its evolutionary roots by adopting a vegetarian diet came up against the reality that much of the 'racially inferior' world was in fact already consuming that very diet, while performing the feats of physical strength and endurance other vegetarians argued were made possible through it.

Despite these internal contradictions, the vegetarian movement benefited greatly from public interest in health and physical culture. Any interest in the theory or practice of diet was a boon to a movement whose foundational principle was based on food selection. Dramatic physical displays like Bernarr Macfadden's and the high-profile participation of vegetarian athletes in races and other competitions provided the public with visual demonstrations of the benefits of including more vegetables in their diets. The burgeoning home economics movement drew on this same interest in health with an emphasis on the application of scientific principles and hygienic practices in the kitchen, some of which were inspired by vegetarianism.

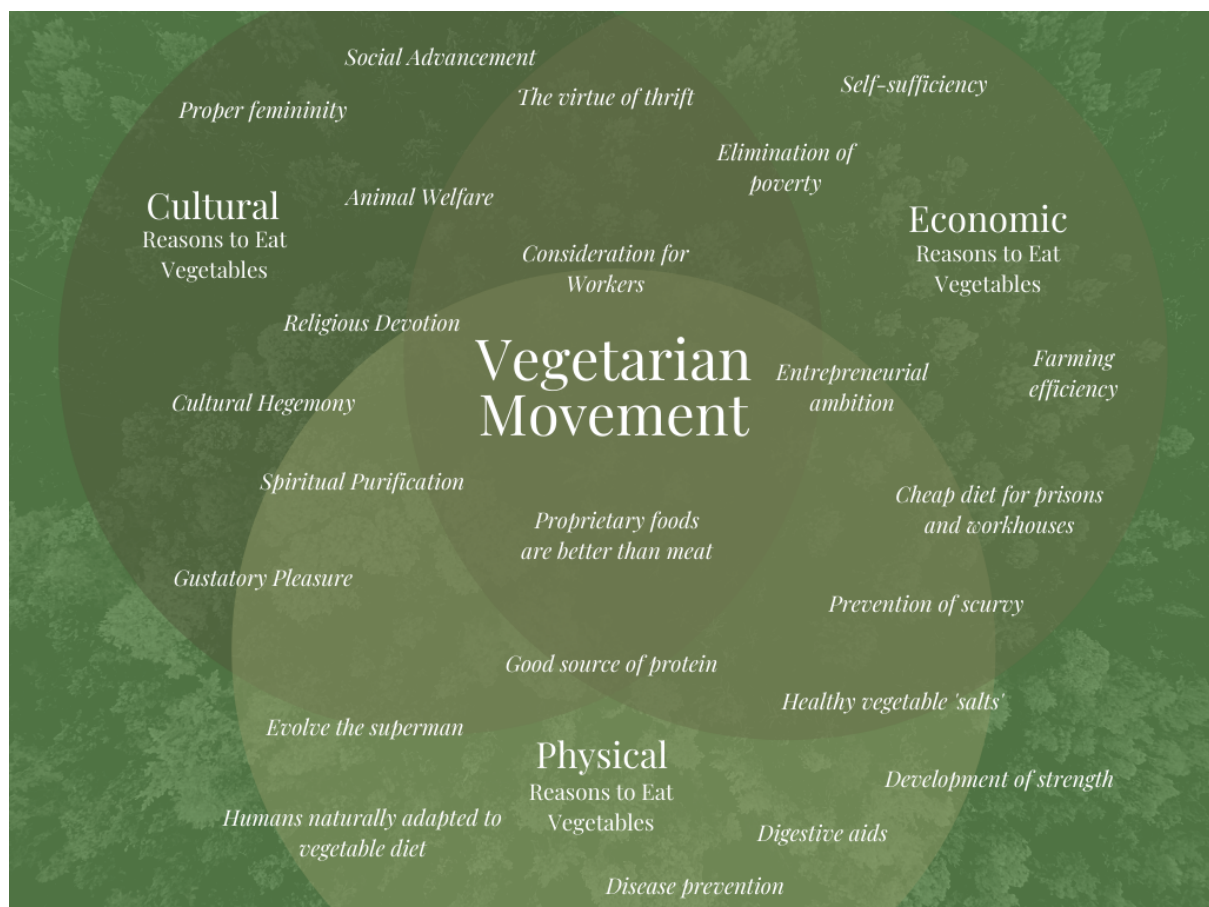
In turn, vegetarian cookbook authors eagerly appropriated the language of home economics, providing chemical charts and nutritional explanations, and even rebranding vegetarianism as the 'hygienic diet'. While many in the medical, chemical and dietetics communities considered vegetarianism a 'fad' or 'extreme' diet, vegetarians made use of the principle that any publicity is good publicity. Whether it was highlighting plant sources of protein, capitalising on public health scandals involving meat, or even entering into debates on racial inferiority, vegetarians pounced on each new possible thread, weaving these principles into increasingly complex arguments in favour of vegetarianism.

Conclusions

Late nineteenth and early twentieth-century vegetarianism was a movement without much of a hierarchical or centralised leadership. Nor was it geared towards legislative change or collective action, except on an individually-practiced level. Unlike more focused movements like abolition of slavery or women's suffrage, vegetarianism's motivations and goals were also diverse. As my analysis shows, cookbook authors committed to vegetarianism cited a multitude of reasons their readers should implement this drastic change in their domestic habits. Most employed several such rationales, and in many cases it is unclear which one is paramount, if indeed any is paramount, or if they might more accurately be described as complementary pieces of a belief system built not so much around a problem as a solution. For in many ways, vegetarianism was a solution without a problem, or at least a solution that could be applied to a variety of different problems, using a multitude of interlocking and sometimes self-referential arguments. This made it possible for individual vegetarians to reach for dietary utopianism, arguing that adopting a plant-based diet could solve every human problem from hunger to war and violence—or even create a super-race. However, the aim of vegetarianism as a movement was not alleviating world hunger, eliminating war or attaining the *Übermensch*; it was the infinitely simple and eternally arduous goal known to every twenty-first-century parent of toddlers: getting people to eat their vegetables.

This expansive diversity, yet weird specificity of the vegetarian project makes its consideration in light of the contemporary atmosphere around eating vegetables particularly fruitful. As a movement situated around food, vegetarianism had a long culinary and cultural history to draw from, which is exactly what its champions did, in endlessly inventive ways. The centuries-old tradition of fast-day cooking, for example, lent vegetarianism not only the perception of meat as a food that inclined people towards sin and violence, but also plant-based meals moulded into the form of the meat for which they were a proxy, a practice the Kelloggs popularised and made simple even for novices with their introduction of canned Protose. Innumerable examples could be chosen to illustrate the concepts, trends and arguments that provided fuel for the vegetarian movement. The chart below displays the major

threads we have discussed and the ways they intersect not only with one another, but also with the movement.



These interlocking circles of vegetable-positive influence illustrate perhaps the most important contribution of my research to the literature: the understanding that social movements can best be conceptualised as conglomerations of overlapping attitudes, motivations and objectives. While other social movements might exist around more specific problems than vegetarianism, what they share is this layeredness, along with the shifting and permeable edges of their various layers. Viewing such movements from their centre, they may seem to have clear boundaries and a unified goal; however, excavation along these perceived perimeters reveals crucial links and influences that might otherwise have seemed tangential, peripheral, or even entirely unrelated. A critical tool for this type of digging is the interrogation of both positive and negative framings for central tenets of these movements, which may reveal unexpected congruences with seemingly unrelated rhetorical threads, and help explain how the movement's arguments were chosen and shaped. Finally, it is impossible to overstate the fundamental role source selection plays in influencing

our understanding of social movements, their leaders and adherents. Only by actively seeking out sources that highlight traditionally underrepresented voices can we gain a full picture of how these movements developed, and their complex relationships to other phenomena.

In the case of vegetarianism, a facet of the movement underscored by my study is the significant role women played in the dissemination of vegetarianism through mobilising their traditional roles in the home and kitchen. Over two-thirds of my cookbooks were written by women, and their influence and expertise were also appropriated by male authors. Secure in their authority as experts of the practical kitchen, these women could—and did—expand the purview of their cookbooks to include not only recipes but also nutritional information, philosophical argumentation, scientific research findings and more. Even when the chemists and doctors they quoted were male, these female authors were the ones selecting and curating the details they shared with readers, and therefore shaping not only which information they received, but the form in which they received it and the lens through which they were encouraged to view it. These texts would have been largely read by women as well, providing a way radical ideas could be passed from woman to woman, between the unassuming covers of a cookbook.

Vegetarianism was shaped by the culinary and cultural milieu in which it developed; however, the transmission went both ways. Because my research reaches out beyond the movement itself, we can understand that the contemporaneous home economics movement gave vegetarian authors new language and information they could use to make arguments for vegetarianism more persuasive. However, we also see how leaders of the home economics movement like Rorer came into dialogue with vegetarianism, producing their own vegetarian cookbooks or invoking the ‘generally acknowledged’ healthiness of vegetarians as an inducement for eating vegetables. Similarly, while vegetarians mobilised scientific findings to provide rationales for their preferred diet, the increasing prominence of vegetarianism also played a role in nutritional and medical research, as well as day-to-day medical practice. Researchers studied vegetarians to ascertain the importance of protein, doctors sought advice on how to give self-empowered patients obsessed with ‘fad diets’ tactful guidance, and debates raged over the role of plant-based eating in both ‘racial inferiority’ and eugenics schemes.

The solution of vegetarianism was applied by cookbook authors and others to so many of the (perceived) problems of the period, including poverty, animal cruelty, moral degradation, racial degeneration, disease, food impurities and physical weakness caused by office work, that it is no surprise some of its adherents referred to it in millennial terms. From the vantage point of the present, it is clear that this very malleability of the vegetarian movement has helped it continue to grow and regularly resurge in relevance as it adapts itself as a solution to new problems. Exploration of this recurring relevance represents a promising avenue of future study for historians, sociologists, media scholars and others.

As the twenty-first century faces a mounting environmental crisis and upsurge in 'diseases of affluence' (not to mention a ballooning weight-loss industry), vegetarianism is once more being invoked as a solution. Meanwhile, vegetarians themselves continue as a small but influential minority. Approximately 5% of Americans identified as vegetarian in 2018, although the number was 7-8% in people under 50.³⁷⁹ A 2012 review of the academic literature on vegetarianism described it as 'a blossoming field of study', and found that many of the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century motivations for vegetarianism, such as ethics, religion and health hold true in the twenty-first century.³⁸⁰ Others, like weight-loss or combatting climate change, have been added to the repertoire of vegetarian rationales, both in vegetarian literature and related research. In 2016 Huang et al. concluded after a meta-analysis of twelve studies on the topic that 'vegetarian diets appeared to have significant benefits on weight reduction compared to nonvegetarian diets'.³⁸¹ And evidence for the importance of relying on plant-based food sources to minimise environmental disaster has only mounted in the decade since Stehfest et al. declared that dietary changes in the direction of vegetarianism could 'play an important role in future climate change mitigation policies'.³⁸²

Is vegetarianism a solution to our warming planet, expanding waistlines and a global epidemic of diseases like diabetes, heart disease and cancer? One can imagine that vegetarians of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries—ever

³⁷⁹ Jason P. Rocha et al., 'Multiple Health Benefits and Minimal Risks Associated with Vegetarian Diets', *Current Nutrition Reports* 8, no. 4 (2019): 374–81, 375.

³⁸⁰ Matthew B. Ruby, 'Vegetarianism. A Blossoming Field of Study', *Appetite* 58, no. 1 (2012): 141–50, 143.

³⁸¹ Ru-Yi Huang et al., 'Vegetarian Diets and Weight Reduction: A Meta-Analysis of Randomized Controlled Trials', *Journal of General Internal Medicine: JGIM* 31, no. 1 (2016): 109–16.

³⁸² E. Stehfest et al., 'Climate Benefits of Changing Diet', *Climatic Change* 95, no. 1–2 (2009): 83–102, 83.

alert to new ways of increasing the relevance of their cause—would answer with a resounding yes.

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