

# VARIOUS

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Various

**The Mirror of Literature,  
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**The Mirror of Literature, Amusement, and  
Instruction / Volume 20, No. 558, July 21, 1832**

**THE NEW CHURCH OF ST. DUNSTAN IN THE WEST**



In our fourteenth volume we took a farewell glance of the old church of St. Dunstan, and adverted to the proposed new structure. Little did we then expect that within three years the removal of the old church would be effected, and a fabric of greatly surpassing beauty raised in its place. All this has been accomplished by the unanimity of the parishioners of St. Dunstan, unaided by any

public grant, and assisted only by their own right spirit, integrity, and well-directed taste. The erection of this Church, as the annexed Engraving shows, is not to be considered merely as a parochial, but as a public, benefit, and must be ranked among the most important of our metropolitan improvements. The different situation of the new and the old churches will occasion an addition of 30 feet to the width of the opposite street, and it will be perceived by the Engraving,<sup>1</sup> that improvements are contemplated in the houses adjoining the church, so as to give an *unique* architectural character to this portion of the line of Fleet-street.

The church has been built from the designs and under the superintendance of John Shaw, Esq., F.R. and A.S. the architect of Christ's Hospital. The tower is of the Kelton stone, a very superior kind of freestone, of beautiful colour, from the county of Rutland. Of this material King's College Chapel, Cambridge, and many other of our finest edifices have been constructed. The tower has below an entrance doorway, finished with rich mouldings and tracery; on each side are the arms of his Majesty and the City of London. Above is a clock with three dials, and a belfry to admit the fine set of bells<sup>2</sup> from the old church, the sound of which will doubtless receive effect through the four large upper windows which are the main features of the tower. Above these windows, the tower, hitherto square, becomes gradually octagonal, springing from corbeled heads; till terminated by four octagonal pinnacles, and crowned by an octagonal moulded battlement. Upon the tower is an enriched stone lantern, perforated with gothic windows of two heights, each angle having a buttress and enriched finial; the whole being terminated by an ornamental, pierced, and very rich crown parapet. The height of the tower, to the battlements, is 90 feet; and the whole height of the tower and lantern is 130 feet.

The body of the church is of fine brick, finished with stone, and of octagon form, about 50 feet diameter. The interior has eight recesses; one of these being occupied by the altar with a large pointed window above, and three others by the organ and galleries for the children of the parish schools: the remaining four recesses are unoccupied by galleries; against their walls are placed the sepulchral monuments from the old church. The octagon form was often adopted in the lady-chapels at the east end of our most ancient cathedrals, where the recesses were devoted to tombs and private chapels. The upper or clere story is supported on arches, with an enriched gothic window in each compartment. The roof springs from clustered columns, branching into an enriched groined ceiling, with a very large and embellished pendent key-stone in the centre, from which will be suspended the chandelier to light the whole of the interior. The ornaments of this key-stone are of a very elegant character: its foliated tracery, as well as the richness of the bosses, corbels, and other embellishments throughout the interior, are extremely beautiful. The pewing, gallery fronts, and fittings will be of fine oak; and we learn that the altar and eight clere story windows will be filled with painted glass. The church is calculated to hold about 900 persons.

The tower is connected with the main body by a lobby, and will front the street, enclosed with a handsome railing. The builders of the church are Messrs. Browne and Atkinson, of Goswell-street, London; and the pewing and interior fittings are about to be executed by Messrs. Cubitt.

We could occupy a column or a page with enumerating the monumental remains of the old church, although we have already mentioned the principal of them. (*See Mirror*, vol. xiv. p. 145-243.) It is our intention to return to them, even if it be but to point the attention of the lover of parochial antiquities to a Series of Views of St. Dunstan and its Monuments, with an Historical Account of the Church, by the Rev. J.F. Denham; which by its concise yet satisfactory details, leads us to wish that every parish in the metropolis were illustrated by so accomplished an annalist.

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<sup>1</sup> Copied, by permission, from a handsome Lithograph, published by Mr. Waller, Fleet-street.

<sup>2</sup> The tower of the old church was furnished with a set of eight very excellent bells: there was also a bell of a smaller size suspended in one of the turrets, which was rung every morning at a quarter before seven o'clock. On the walls of the belfry were some records of exploits in ringing, which had been performed there on different occasions.

## ITALIAN HYMN TO THE MADONNA

When the cypress-tree is weeping  
With the bright rose o'er the tomb.  
And the sunny orb is sleeping  
On the mountain's brow of gloom.  
Sweet mother at thy shrine  
Our spirits melt in prayer,  
Beneath the loveliness divine,  
Which art has pictured there.

Or when the crystal star of Even  
Is mirror'd in the silent sea,  
And we can almost deem that heaven  
Derives its calmest smile from thee.  
Oh, virgin, if the lute  
Invokes thy name in song,  
Be thine the only voice that's mute,  
Amid the tuneful throng.

When battle waves her falchion gory,  
Over the dead on sea or land,  
And one proud heart receives the glory,  
Won by the blood of many a band,  
If the hero's prayer to thee,  
From his fading lips be given,  
Awake his heart to ecstasy,  
With brightest hopes of heaven.

Madonna! on whose bosom slumber'd,  
The infant, Christ, with sunny brow,  
The viewless hours have pass'd unnumber'd,  
Since we adored thy shrine as now;  
But not the gorgeous sky,  
Nor the blue expansive sea,  
To us such beauty could supply,  
As that which hallow'd thee!

And when the scenes of life are faded  
From our dim eyes like phantom-things,  
When gentlest hearts with gloom are shaded,  
And cease to thrill at Fancy's strings,  
*Thou*, like the rainbow's form,  
When summer skies are dark,  
Shalt give thy light amid the storm,  
And guide the Wanderer's bark!

*G.R. CARTER.*

## ANIMAL AND VEGETABLE FOOD

*"For my part I do much admire, with what soul or with what appetite the first man, with his mouth touched slaughter, and reached to his lips the flesh of a dead animate."—PLUTARCH.*

We ought not perhaps to insist too much on the opinions of the heathen philosophers, because the extension of knowledge, and a more matured experience, has shown the fallacy of many of their notions; but if we were permitted to lay any stress on the authority of these celebrated men, we might bring forward a mine of classical learning in commendation of a vegetable diet; we might point to the life of a Pythagoras, or a Seneca, as well as to the works of a Plato, and show how the wisest among the ancients lived, as well as thought, with regard to this subject.

But we shall be contented, as far as authority is concerned, to rest our claims to attention, rather upon that which bears a more modern date, and to bring forward the evidence of facts instead of the theories of ingenuity. The subject itself we may venture to hope, though a little homely, is not without interest, and certainly not unimportant. It is somewhat scientific from its very nature, and so far from being a matter confined to the medical faculty, it is one on which every man exerts, every day of his existence, his own free choice, as far indeed as custom has allowed him the exercise of that freedom.

But, though we will not go back to the dreams of our forefathers, (who, if they had more genius, had fewer materials for it to work upon than their servile children,) yet we must always make the Bible an exception, and in the present case we find it expedient as well as becoming, to refer to that oldest and most valuable of records. We have there no express mention of eating flesh before the Flood; but, on the contrary, a direct command that man should subsist on the fruits of the earth. ("Behold I have given you every herb bearing seed which is upon the face of the earth, and every tree in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to *you it shall be for meat*"—Gen. i. 29.)

After the Flood, when the Israelites were distressed for want of food in the Wilderness, we find that it was sent to them from heaven in a vegetable form, and to denote its divine origin and its superior excellency, it is called in the Scriptures "the corn of heaven," and "angels' food," &c. Oftener than once this favoured but ungrateful people despised and loathed this miraculous provision; they called out for animal food, and accordingly quails were sent them, but they were punished with destruction by the flesh which they desired; ("And while the flesh was yet between their teeth, ere it was chewed, the wrath of the Lord was kindled against the people, and the Lord smote the people with a very great plague."—Numb. xi. 33.)

Thus in the first ages of the world, and during the shepherd state of society, men lived upon berries, and such fruits as the earth spontaneously produced; we have mentioned generally how the philosophers of Greece and Rome preferred to live, and there are not wanting instances of men bred up in the sensuality of modern times who have followed their example. The philosopher, Franklin, who reached a great age, for a considerable portion of his life kept entirely to a vegetable diet; and Abernethy, a name yet more familiar in our ears, has left us this maxim, that "a vegetable diet and abstinence from fermented liquors tends more than anything else to tranquillize the system."—(vide the *Abernethian Code*.) Another popular and scientific writer of the present day makes a similar confession, which coming from such an unexpected quarter carries weight: "Although professedly friends to gastronomy, moderated by a decided aversion to anything like sensuality, we are of opinion that man is less fit to feed upon carnal than vegetable substance." (Accum's *Culinary Chemistry*.)

The author of *The Art of Improving Health*, has also a passage in point: "An animal diet, especially in temperate climates, is more wasting than a vegetable; because it excites by its stimulating qualities a fever after every meal, by which the springs of life are urged into constant and weakening exertions: on the contrary, a vegetable diet tends to preserve a delicacy of feeling, a liveliness of

imagination, and an acuteness of judgment, seldom enjoyed by those who live principally on meat." Thus we might go on multiplying authorities on this subject, but we shall content ourselves with referring briefly to one or two authors of a more literary stamp, and have done with quotation. The eloquent Shelley, in his notes to *Queen Mab*, pretty roundly assures us, that "according to comparative anatomy, man resembles frugivorous animals in everything, carnivorous in nothing;" and the famous author of the *Anatomy of Melancholy*, has quaintly but nervously observed, "As a lamp is choked with over much oil, or a fire with too much wood, so is the natural heat strangled in the body by the superfluous use of flesh; thus men wilfully pervert the good temperature of their bodies, stifle their wits, strangle nature, and degenerate into beasts." The somewhat visionary but fascinating Rousseau, has also in his *Treatise of Education*, to which we refer our readers, most powerfully condemned the use of flesh, and he humorously attributes the proverbial boorishness of Englishmen to their fondness for roast beef!

And now let us look a little to facts: in all ages of the world those have ever been the most savage nations which observed an animal diet. Thus the Tartars, the Ethiopians, the Scythians, and the Arabians, who live wholly on animal food, possess that ferocity of mind and fierceness of character, common to carnivorous animals, while the vegetable diet of the Brahmins and Hindoos gives to their character a gentleness and mildness directly the reverse; potatoes, chestnuts, &c. satisfy the wants of the Alpine peasant, and there are numerous, harmless tribes, who feed solely on vegetables and water. Even Homer in his time has made the Cyclops, who were flesh eaters, horrid monsters of men, and the Lotophagi, he has described as a people so amiable, that when strangers had once become acquainted with them, and tasted the fruits on which they lived, they even forgot their native country to take up their abode with their hosts. But in those civilized countries where animal food is commonly eaten, it must follow that the lower orders, who compose the great majority of the population, cannot partake of it in any great quantities; now it does not appear that the rich enjoy better health from this luxurious mode of living, or that the poor are less healthy from the want of it; on the contrary, the wealthier classes are subject to many chronic and other disorders arising from their aliment, and they have a very large body of physicians, who subsist by a constant attendance on them, while on the other hand, those in the lower walks of life are seldom out of health, owing to their more simple and less injurious mode of living; they suffer only from accident and natural disease, and, generally speaking, when they are attacked, it proves their first and last illness. Moreover, as the poor are more at ease while they live, so too experience shows that they live longer; cases of longevity are very rare with those in affluent circumstances, while most of the famous instances on record of persons arriving at extraordinary old age, have been peasants, fishermen, &c.

An hospital was established some short time since in the neighbourhood of London for the purpose of experiment, and it was ascertained by actual computation, and by comparison with the bills of mortality, that an average number of persons will reach a greater age by observing strictly a vegetable diet.

Compared with the English, the French have a greater proportion of arable land than pasture, and consequently they rear fewer cattle, yet they have a thriving population, and that would hardly be if they were stinted in quality or quantity of food. The Irish peasantry live principally on potatoes, yet they have seldom been found fault with as labourers, and seem to be a well-built and able-bodied race of men. But we have not only sufficient proof of the beneficial effect of vegetable aliment—there are many instances on record, if we had time or space for them—to show how detrimental the contrary regimen has sometimes been. One example is worth mentioning: a man was prevailed on by a reward to live upon partridges without any vegetables, but he was obliged to desist at the end of eight days, from the appearance of strong symptoms of putrefaction.

That we live upon meat, and yet increase in growth and strength is little to the point, but whether we might not be still better without it; dogs thrive upon flesh, but biscuits are better for them: that we are fond of it is still less pertinent, for who does not know that custom alters nature itself, that it

becomes, in fact, a second nature, and that such things as we are accustomed to, though actually evil in their own nature, yet become gradually less offensive, and at last pleasant. We have very remarkable proofs of this in all parts of the world. In China they eat cats and dogs, while the poorer classes think rats, mice, and other vermin, no bad food. The Romans thought peacocks a dainty, which we quite nauseate. The Greenlander and the Esquimaux relish train-oil, whilst these and all savages, on first tasting our wines are disgusted and spit them out. Horse-flesh is commonly sold in the markets of the north. Then again, there are some wandering Moors, who subsist entirely on gum senegal, and there have been many cases of shipwreck where the mariners have even subsisted for weeks on old shoes, tobacco, or whatever they could get; in short, what cannot custom effect? The Turk, by constant habit, is enabled to take opium in quantities that would soon destroy us; and every one must have known private cases where individuals in this country could take laudanum in surprising doses; we have all more or less experienced the power of habit in our acquired tastes, and whether we derive pleasure from the fumes of tobacco, or approve the flavour of olives, we may remember that at first we disliked, or were indifferent about either. History itself informs us, that Mithridates was able to drink poison; and there was a female slave, sent to Alexander by King Porus, who was even brought up with it from her infancy. But to bring this influence of custom upon the taste, still more in point, we find recorded in a work upon zoology, the following remarkable case:—The provender for a lamb, which a ship's company had on board, was all consumed; in the absence of other food they offered it flesh, which it was at last compelled to devour, and gradually acquired such a relish for this new aliment, that it could never after be prevailed on to eat any thing else.

It is very certain that the most natural tastes are the most simple: our first aliment is milk, and it is only by degrees we bring ourselves to relish strong food; one speaking proof that such stimulating diet is not natural to the human palate, is the indifference children have for such food, and they evidently prefer pastry, fruit, &c., until the digestive organs become more depraved. Neither has man the peculiarities of a carnivorous animal; he has no hawk-bill, no sharp talons to tear his prey, and he wants that strength of stomach and power of digestion which is requisite to assimilate such heavy fare; his tongue is not rough, but, as compared with that of ravenous animals, of a very smooth texture; neither are his teeth pointed and rough like a saw, which above all is a distinguishing mark. It is well known that in our West Indian colonies, all the negroes still surviving, who were originally brought over from Africa, have their teeth filed down to this day, which was at first expressly done for the purpose of tearing and eating human flesh. It is probable that the first man who adopted this most horrible custom, was driven to it by necessity and the want or scarcity of other food, and we know certainly that cannibals are as much excited by the spirit of revenge as by an appetite for flesh, in devouring their captured enemies; we, however, have not even this poor plea; we are even ungrateful in attending to the satisfaction of our desires, for we kill without remorse, as well the ox that labours for us, as the sheep that clothes us, and disregarding all the natural wealth of the fields, and the delicacies of the garden, we capriciously destroy creatures who are no doubt sent into the world to enjoy life as well as ourselves. But you who contend that you are born with an inclination to such food, why object to kill what you would eat? do it, however, with your own hands, and without the aid of a knife; tear your victim to pieces with your fingers, as lions do with their claws, and after worrying a hare or a lamb, fall on and eat alive as they do; drink up the flowing blood, and devour the flesh while it is yet warm! Is not the very idea horrible? we know we could not do it; as it is, the sight of uncooked flesh with all its raw horror excites loathing and disgust, and it is only by culinary preparation, it can be softened and rendered somewhat more susceptible of mastication and digestion; it must be completely transformed by roasting, boiling, &c., and afterwards so disguised by salts, spices, and various sauces, that the natural taste is gone, the palate is deceived into the admission of such uncouth fare, and finds a flavour in the taste of these cadaverous morsels.

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