

Eating Serials:  
Pastoral Power, Print Media, and the Vegetarian Society in England, 1847-1897

by

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**Abstract:**

This thesis is based on research I conducted in the archives of the Vegetarian Society. Drawing on Foucault's theories of governmentality and pastoral power, as well as on press scholarship, it argues that print media (the *Vegetarian Advocate* [1848-1851] and *Vegetarian Messenger* [1849-]) served as the pastor of the nineteenth-century vegetarian movement, shaping the conduct of its readers and eaters, and guiding them to their supposed moral and physical salvation. More specifically, I argue that the form of the periodical (its seriality and participatory framework) helped to create the new patterns of consumption and mechanisms of identification that became the basis of the movement. The monthly periodicity of vegetarian journals gave structure to the movement, while open forums such as correspondence invited readers into the construction of vegetarianism's meaning, identity, and practice. By returning to the archival matter of the Vegetarian Society, I recuperate an important debate on England's consumer habits at a time of changing material and cultural conditions.

## Preface:

Parts of chapter six of this thesis appeared in a special issue of *Societies* (volume 5, issue 1, 2015) on “Alimentary Relations, Animal Relations,” edited by Dr. Chloe Taylor and Kelly Struthers-Montford.

### A Note on Archival Materials and Citation Style:

I have elected to cite periodicals (journals, newspapers, magazines) parenthetically by title, date of publication, and page number rather than by the author (if known), or by an article’s title (if the author is not known). The serials that appear most frequently in this dissertation are the *Vegetarian Messenger* and the *Vegetarian Advocate*, which I read, photocopied, and photographed in the archives of the Vegetarian Society and the British Library. Other, non-vegetarian periodicals that appear in this dissertation I have accessed through the digital databases of the University of Alberta’s libraries and Google books.

Since my trip to the Vegetarian Society, the first seven volumes of the *Vegetarian Messenger* have been digitized and uploaded to the Internet Archive (archive.org). These complete volume additions offer a comprehensive resource on the Vegetarian Society, but, because they were bound as volumes, they lack the monthly divisions of the original serial publication; thus, when citing material from these sources, I cannot include the month of publication, and instead I use the year, volume number, and page number.

A few volumes of the *Dietetic Reformer* (for the years 1883-1885) and the *Vegetarian Advocate* (the years 1848-1850) have also recently appeared on Google books, which I have found useful to consult and read through. The online edition of the *Vegetarian Advocate* in particular provided clearer images than my photocopies for producing figures and examples of the text.

### Nineteenth-Century Vegetarian Periodicals:

*The Vegetarian Advocate* London: The Vegetarian Society, 1848-1851.

*The Vegetarian Messenger* Manchester: The Vegetarian Society, 1849-1860.

*The Dietetic Reformer and Vegetarian Messenger* Manchester: The Vegetarian Society, 1861-1886.

*The Vegetarian Messenger*, Manchester: The Vegetarian Society, 1886-1897

*The Vegetarian Messenger and Review*, Manchester: The Vegetarian Society, 1898-1962

*The Food Reform Magazine*, London: The Food Reform Society, 1881-1885.

*The vegetarian, for instance, insists on the total salvation of the human race, if they would only abstain from animal food! This is ridiculous.*

—Walt Whitman, writing under the pseudonym Mose Velsor, in the *New York Atlas*, 1858.

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## Prologue: Reintroducing James Luckcock

Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall begin *Family Fortunes*, their classic study of gender and class formation, by introducing a representative middleclass man, James Luckcock, “a Radical Birmingham jeweller, who died in 1835, aged 74” (13). Luckcock’s biography—from his humble origins as an apprentice to his youthful embrace of Unitarianism to his ultimate rise as a successful manufacturer—allows Davidoff and Hall to set the scene for readers, presenting us with a familiar narrative of religious nonconformity and social reform. But, they argue, if we focus only on Luckcock’s public face—“Luckcock the reformer, the Radical, the prominent Unitarian, the entrepreneur” (18)—then we will arrive at an incomplete understanding of the provincial middleclass culture from which he emerged: “We must go behind the public man to discover the private labours on which new forms of capitalist enterprise were built, new patterns of social life established” (18). On Luckcock’s private life rests their case for integrating the study of gender into an analysis of class. How odd, then, that Davidoff and Hall do not mention what Luckcock himself identified as the linchpin of his domestic life: James Luckcock, the paradigm of nineteenth-century manliness, was a flesh-abstainer, or what we would now call a vegetarian.

The fact that Davidoff and Hall elected upon an everyman who also happened to be a vegetarian is perhaps nothing more than a coincidence, but their omission of his longstanding abstinence also reveals their scholarly investments. Since the publication of *Family Fortunes* in 1987, two interdisciplinary fields, animal studies and food studies, have gained prominence in literary and cultural research, and both would regard Luckcock’s ethical abstinence as more than a passing detail. Animal studies has demonstrated that the figure of “the animal” represents a socially constructed category against which the human defines itself. This distinction between the human and the animal underpins our morality, dividing beings into those who may and may not be killed (Haraway 77-82; Wolfe 6-7; Derrida 392-99). Food studies scholars have demonstrated

that the social practices of cooking and eating are constitutive of identity and subjectivity, or what Judith Butler terms subjectivation, the process of becoming a subject. As Butler argues, “[s]ubjection is, literally, the *making* of the subject” (Butler, *Psychic*, 84). It is also the making of the body: “there is no body outside of power, for the materiality of the body—and materiality itself—is produced by and in direct relation to the investment of power” (91). One power that materializes our bodies is the food we eat: the rituals of dining dramatize, naturalize, and, quite literally, internalize the social and economic power structures we inhabit. Daily meals and seasonal feasts punctuate the passage of time and bind communities together through shared habits of consumption. Procuring, cooking, and consuming food provide a very literal example of how the body is materialized through the “stylized repetition of acts” (*Gender Trouble*, 191), to quote Butler’s famous formulation of performativity. What and how we eat ingrains power in the flesh, as Michel de Certeau suggests:

The foods that are selected by traditions and sold in markets of a society also shape bodies at the same time that they nourish them; they impose on bodies a form and a muscle tone that function like an identity card [...] To tell the truth, they become bodies only by conforming to these codes (De Certeau 147).

To eat otherwise is to resist these codes. Disparate motives and ideas fuelled the vegetarian heresy in the nineteenth century (health, religion, ethics, medicine, and physiology), but, as it gradually coalesced, the vegetarian movement rested upon one central premise: like contemporary scholars in animal and food studies, vegetarians of the nineteenth century saw our relationships with other animals and to what we eat as fundamental sites of embodiment and subject formation. In nineteenth-century England, the consumption of nonhuman animals materially and symbolically consolidated the national body. For this reason, vegetarians targeted the social rituals of food consumption as the means toward social and moral reform. Their dietary experiment was not a political campaign against an identifiable sovereign power or institution, but a struggle to become

other than oneself, to transform the practices that, in De Certeau's words, shape our bodies at the same time that they nourish them. In this opening chapter, I begin to articulate how flesh-abstainers, such as James Luckcock, communicated and distributed their principles and encouraged others to take them up.

If Luckcock provides the introduction to *Family Fortunes*, he will similarly furnish us with a brief portrait of early nineteenth-century vegetarianism before the foundation of the Vegetarian Society (VS) in 1847. He first of all affords us an opportunity to identify several thematic threads that will unfold throughout this dissertation: the embodied politics and dramaturgical tactics of vegetarian advocacy; the influence of religious dissent on its development; the cultivation of a vegetarian subjectivity and collective identity; the practice of everyday life, domestic cookery, and the gendered division of labour in vegetarian homes; and, perhaps most importantly, the crucial role that the periodical press played in disseminating and defining vegetarianism. Luckcock discloses for us how early vegetarians used the press to publicize the practice of flesh abstinence and knit together a print-based community of abstainers. In particular, he makes legible the confluence of religious nonconformity, economic rationality, and print culture that transformed a private practice into a social reform movement in England's industrial north.

In their reading of Luckcock, Davidoff and Hall insist his full significance lies not in his public works, but in his private life, which was founded on religious revivalism and domestic ideology. Their central argument is that, before the middle classes achieved political representation (formalized in Reform Act of 1832), they began to assert their moral superiority. Middleclass men developed their own professional associations, while men and women both participated in new forms of religious belonging that equated personal salvation with a happy home. The middle classes thus rose to power not only through their increasing wealth, but also by reorganizing the moral and social order around an ideology of separate gender spheres: "The

moral order became the central battle ground for the provincial middle classes” (25). During industrialization, new social formations seemed both inevitable and desirable. As Luckcock’s presence in *Family Fortunes* suggests, flesh abstainers wanted to be part of this larger conversation on developing “new patterns of social life” (18) and everyday practices. James Luckcock and Joseph Brotherton (1783-1857), the two figures I discuss in this chapter, represented vegetarianism as a sign of, and means toward, respectability and civic sobriety, distinguishing their masculine identity from that of the dissolute aristocracy, on the one hand, and from the “hard-drinking, pugnacious” masculinity of plebeian culture, on the other (Clark 103). What is remarkable about Luckcock is just how unremarkable he appears to be: “He seems an all too recognizable, if minor, figure” of the early nineteenth century (Davidoff and Hall 15). The appearance of Luckcock in Davidoff and Hall’s text alerts us to the fact that vegetarianism was compatible with emerging middleclass domesticity, religious sentiment, and moral improvement.<sup>1</sup> Adopting its domestic ideology, institutions, and propaganda methods, he worked within and against the carnivorous middleclass culture that he wanted to change.

In the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the “vegetable diet,” or “natural diet” as it was then known, was not unheard of, even though the term, vegetarianism, was not yet in use. Vegetarians living in Britain at the time were known as Pythagoreans or as the “*Bramins* among us” (Morton 16), a phrase that emphasizes their foreignness. The diet did not signify a unified, coherent ideology, but instead attracted disparate groups and individuals for different medical, scientific, political, and religious reasons. For instance, in the early eighteenth century the diet found favour in England and Scotland as a medical regimen; the physician George Cheyne (1671-1743) famously used a diet of milk and vegetables to cure his own obesity and to treat his patients

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<sup>1</sup> The thesis of James Gregory’s history of nineteenth-century vegetarianism is that, despite seeming marginal, vegetarianism “actually involved much that was of concern to the culture of Victorian Britain” (1).

(Spencer 217; Stuart 163). By the late eighteenth century, the natural diet developed associations with the revolutionary fervour of Romantic radicals, such as John Oswald, Joseph Ritson, and Percy Bysshe Shelly, who saw meat eating as form of political tyranny.<sup>2</sup> Perhaps most importantly for the establishment of vegetarianism in England, in 1809 the Reverend William Cowherd (1763-1816) promulgated abstinence from flesh among his congregation of Bible Christians in Salford (Axon 40). Cowherd, who saw himself as both a physician and pastor (Axon 40), took it upon himself to care for the bodies and souls of his followers. For him, a temperate diet of fruits and vegetables released one from the bodily passions, and led to a healthy life and spiritual mind.

From among these better-known British Pythagoreans, I have chosen to follow Hall and Davidoff in using Luckcock to introduce my study not because of any particular ideology or argument that he brought to bear on the vegetarian diet, but because of *how* he went about disseminating it. Luckcock was a frequent correspondent with Birmingham-based journal, the *Monthly Repository*, “a Unitarian monthly review known for its progressive politics and literary content” (Mussell 135). Robert Aspland, the magazine’s editor, founded the *Monthly Repository* in 1806 as “a forum for public debate, a debate constituted as much by readers as the editor” (Armstrong, n.p.). Through its adherence to free discussion, the *Monthly Repository* carried a “political subtext” of antiauthoritarianism and democratic inquiry (Armstrong n.p.). A journal committed to free thought, it offered Luckcock space to raise a public debate about the ethics of eating. His contributions to the monthly review spanned many subjects: he wrote letters on the effects of industrialization, on the political theory of Malthus, on education, and on moral dilemmas. He contributed an ode, “To My Dog, Corporal Trim,” that highlights his love for

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<sup>2</sup> John Oswald’s *Cry of Nature* (1791), Joseph Ritson’s *An Essay on Abstinence from Animal Food as a Moral Duty* (1803), Percy Bysshe Shelley’s *A Vindication of a Natural Diet* (1813) and George Nicholson’s *On the Conduct of Man to the Inferior Animals* (1797) and *The Primeval Diet of Man* (1803) all advocate the practice on moral, rather than only medical, grounds, infusing republican rhetoric into humanitarian dietetics. On Oswald, Ritson, and Shelley, see Timothy Morton, *Shelley and the Revolution in Taste*, and “Romantic Vegetarianism,” 52-58.

animals (*Monthly Repository*, Oct 1821, 620). In 1819, he raised the subject of total abstinence from animal food, adopting the journal's interrogation of orthodox religion in order to unsettle orthodoxy in the diet. His aim, in broaching the topic, was to establish food as a legitimate subject for public discourse.

Luckcock's interventions into the periodical press mark an important moment in history of vegetarian advocacy. Luckcock did not write a treatise advocating abstinence for moral or medical reasons, nor did he prescribe or defend his diet; instead, he appealed to the politics of the periodical form, its commitment to including a republic of voices. Luckcock draws our attention to the medium of the press: the open-endedness of the periodical format, the way in which each issue anticipates future issues and contributions, was crucial to how vegetarianism was gradually shaped and shared through an on-going discussion. In the absence of an established movement, the press lent support to the development of vegetarian habits and a vegetarian community.

### **“A New Sect of Abstainers from Animal Food.”**

I first learned of James Luckcock in the archives of the VS where I came across a bound volume of the *Monthly Repository* bookmarked to the May 1819 issue. At Luckcock's request, this Unitarian journal had published a pair of letters discussing “A New Sect of Abstainers from Animal Food” (figure i). The letters are of interest both for their subject matter (the practice of flesh abstinence) and their mode of address. Not initially written for publication, the letters do not themselves address the editor or readers of the journal. Nor, in fact, do they directly advocate abstinence from animal food. Rather, the *Monthly Repository* agreed to include in its “Miscellaneous Communications” Luckcock's private correspondence with Joseph Brotherton, a minister in the Bible Christian Church of Salford, “the members of which abstained from animal food and intoxicating liquor” (*MR*, May 1819, 313). The letters disclose a private conversation in which Luckcock, an inquisitive outsider, and Brotherton, an inner member, address each other and work

through the practical difficulties of living as a flesh abstainer in the nineteenth century. Because they present a private conversation for a public audience, the letters operate on two levels: they achieve the practical aim of conducting information between the two authors, but they display this conversation for an audience of non-abstainers. Readers of the letters were thus positioned as eavesdroppers, overhearing a dialogue, and this indirect mode of addressing the audience characterizes the dramaturgical tactics of vegetarian propaganda. Luckcock hoped that, by publishing their conversation in a semi-public forum, he could stimulate readers to take up a discussion of the ethics of killing animals, a discussion that might carry on over several issues in the *Monthly Repository*.

In Birmingham, Luckcock came from a Unitarian tradition of free thought and critical inquiry; Brotherton emerged from a religious community, the Bible Christians, for whom abstinence from flesh was the path to a healthy, higher life. Their conversation, and its subsequent publication, dramatizes some of the conflicting tendencies that would define the practice and advocacy of vegetarianism in the nineteenth century: the desire to purify oneself, and the impulse to purify the world; sectarian retreat from the world, and the diffusive, centrifugal force of the press. Following Alan Gilbert's analysis of religious movements during industrialization, I refer to these two tendencies as consolidation and expansion (55), or as pastoring the flock and proselytizing to the uninitiated. The vegetarian movement, as it developed in the nineteenth century, inherited the "conversionist zeal" (52) of English nonconformity, working aggressively to make converts, but it was equally concerned with tending the flock, building a community among its adherents. The press encounter between Brotherton and Luckcock puts into relief the tension between these two demands. We have, on the one hand, a sectarian religious group, one of the many "competing sects and seceding chapels" (Thompson 55) that, according to E.P. Thompson, developed in the eighteenth century and laid the groundwork for political agitation in the



nineteenth (55). Because of their emphasis on self-governance and local autonomy (Thompson 30), eighteenth-century dissenting sects created spaces not necessarily for engagement with civil society, but for the protection of traditional communities from the incursions of capitalism and the state (Thompson 89-90; Calhoun 84). On the other hand, and in contrast to this older repertoire of sectarian withdrawal, we also witness in the encounter between Luckcock and Brotherton the nineteenth century's enthusiasm for circulating information in print, which breached the borders of the sect. James Luckcock began his postal communication with the Bible Christian Church precisely as a way of sharing practical knowledge on abstaining from animal food, but he did not keep this information to himself. His efforts to publish his and Brotherton's personal correspondence pushed the subject of flesh abstinence beyond the borders of "the religious society" (*MR*, May 1819, 313) and into a new arena, the public space of the periodical. In the letters exchanged between Luckcock and Brotherton we can detect the emergence of two different meanings and intentions behind "abstaining from animal food" (313), which members of the VS would later distinguish as *old* and *new* vegetarianism: vegetarianism as a sectarian practice and vegetarianism "as propagandist movement, a conscious endeavour to benefit not merely the individual, but human society itself" (Salt 16; Axon 2).

In the first letter, dated April 13, 1819, Luckcock introduced himself to a "Mr. W.—"<sup>3</sup> on the supposition that he and W shared an interest in Luckcock's "favourite subject" (313), a vegetable diet. Luckcock informed his correspondent that he had recently "learnt in an imperfect way that a religious society was established in your town, under the pastorship of Mr. Cowherd" (312-13) in which "one of the tenets, unanimously adopted, was the abstaining from animal food"

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<sup>3</sup> "Mr. W" may refer to William Cowherd, the founder of the abstinent sect, though Cowherd passed away in 1816. It seems more likely that Luckcock addresses himself to William Metcalfe (1788-1862), another of Cowherd's disciples and a minister in the Bible Christian Church. Metcalfe, however, left England two years earlier in 1817 to establish a Bible Christian community in Philadelphia (Forward 260-261). Metcalfe's departure perhaps explains why Joseph Brotherton took it upon himself to respond to Luckcock's letter of inquiry in 1819.

times to be met with among the philosophers of modern times. The following passage\* is in the same spirit. "Follow then, feeble reasoner, follow in thy public worship of the beneficent Deity, the sacred laws of thy country, the human intellect not being able to attain any positive knowledge upon this subject."

These instances go no further than conformity; the result of scepticism and a proud scorn of such as, being persuaded of the truth and importance of their own opinions, choose openly to dissent from established systems. But the same contempt for the understandings and opinions of mankind, leading to the arrogant conclusion that truth is for themselves alone, and that for the rest ignorance and falsehood are best suited, when united with and made subservient to views of interest and ambition, has led many, there is good reason to believe, not only to countenance systems of religion which they despised, but to persecute as bitterly as the fanatic and the bigot. Despising not religion only, but their fellow-men, and holding sincerity in utter contempt, they were little likely to sympathize with such as exposed themselves to suffering on account of that which was the object of their scorn, or to tolerate those whom they arrogantly treated as unfit to make use of their reasoning faculties.

R. T.

Birmingham,  
May 5, 1819.

SIR,  
SHOULD you think that the subject of the following recent correspondence, comes within the scope of your Miscellany, the letters are not merely at your service, but you will oblige me by their insertion; and thereby I hope excite the attention of some other of your friends, and produce other contributions. That it

\* From *Gids der Braven*, "L'Agenda des Bonnes Gens," 1794, apparently the work of some French emigrant in Holland. — "Suis donc, foible raisonneur, suis dans tes hommages publics envers la Divinité bienfaisante, les saintes loix de ta patrie, l'intelligence humaine ne pouvant connoître rien de positif à cet égard."

involves an important and extensive moral question, will be admitted by those who may still conform to the almost universally established usage; while those who consider the social relations of life and of civilized society as fatally wounded in their vital energies by the hitherto overwhelming prejudice, will welcome any attempt to remove it. That the system hereby recommended will gain ground, as the principles on which it is founded may be better examined and understood, can hardly admit of doubt; and in the course of moral improvement, it may be no unreasonable anticipation, that it will in its turn be the fashionable topic of public zeal. I shall not now attempt any vindication of it, nor do I pledge myself either to future silence or reply; but I do hope it may be noticed by some of your worthy contributors, and I shall be better satisfied to leave it in their hands; attention to the subject and not to myself is the motive. One reflection alone I beg leave to intrude. What influence may the voluntary and capricious destruction of animal life be fairly supposed to have on the national character, as respects the assent to, or the vindication of *human carnage*?

The gift of life comes equally from the same common Parent; and the assumed authority to destroy it ought to have unanswerable testimony in its support, or it should be abandoned. Inflict death on a worm, a beetle, or an oyster, as a natural right, to gratify the vanity of superior power or the mere indulgence of the palate, and the vitiated mind is prepared in no slight degree to consider the slaughter of our *fellow-men* as allowable, or even as the highest pinnacle of glory. We hold the shedding of blood much too cheaply: how shall the demoralizing consequences be best counteracted?

JAMES LUCKCOCK.

"To Mr. W. —, Manchester.

"SIR,

"Without any other apology than the sanction of the name of Mr. Hone, I introduce myself to your notice, on the supposition that the subject on which I have to request your reply, is attended with some interest to your feelings. Some time ago I learnt in an imperfect way that a religious society was established in your

Figure i: "A New Sect of Flesh Abstainers" from *The Monthly Repository*, May 1819. *Vegetarian Society Archives*.

(313). His letter requested from Mr W information on the habits of the Cowherdite sect. The scriptural and political reasons for abstaining from animal food did not immediately interest Luckcock. His concerns were earthly and domestic. He raised questions about the adoption of "any necessary substitute, such as eggs or milk or any other substance" (313), and inquired into the use of beverages among the society's members. Luckcock, as he professed, made his

application not out of “idle curiosity” (312), but as a fellow abstainer. In his letter, Luckcock regarded Manchester’s “New Sect” as a model and resource to guide him in his daily life.

From Luckcock’s comments, we can see why Gilbert’s argument on the social function of dissenting sects—“chapel communities were able to meet associational, recreational, and communal needs which otherwise would have gone unfulfilled” (90)—applies well to early flesh abstainers, who not only were contending with the estrangement of industrialization, but who also voluntarily severed one of the strongest bonds of sociality: food. Luckcock’s attempt to reach out to the Manchester sect discloses for us the interrelated personal and political motives that he brought to advocating the vegetable diet. His initial aim seems not to have been to make converts to his way of life, but to protect it. His letter presents us with a candid portrait of the alienation experienced by those who contravened dietary orthodoxy. As he confessed to Mr W,

The inveterate prejudices, and sometime unfriendly attacks, with which I am assailed, have made me anxious to meet the question on every ground of fair and rational defence. It is in vain to urge my own example as a proof of the competency of the system to maintain its pretensions to health and enjoyment; I am exultingly told that a solitary example proves nothing;—and when I resort to the argument of the healthy state of the Irish potatoe-eating peasantry, then am I reproached with mere assertion. (May 1819, 313)

Luckcock’s desire to advocate the vegetable diet in public developed out of a defensive reaction: it was, as he says, the “unfriendly attacks” upon him that made him “anxious to meet the question on every fair and rational ground of defence” (313). It is not too surprising that Luckcock’s example of the “potatoe-eating Irish peasantry” failed to convince his acquaintances to abandon the roast beef of Old England. Luckcock, however, hoped his narrative would appeal to like-minded readers of the *Monthly Repository*, who were similarly eager to demonstrate their nonconformity, but vegetarianism was a step too far for many of the middle classes, for whom the consumption of butcher’s meat was a mark of distinction. Because of the “inveterate prejudice” against a vegetable diet, vegetarians were, Luckcock suggests, always on the defensive.

The difference between Luckcock and Brotherton lay in the fact that Luckcock did not have the protection of a community. A social organization sheltered the solitary abstainer from ridicule, and shored up his or her resolve.

The following week Luckcock received a reply, dated 21 April, 1819, not from Mr. W., but from Joseph Brotherton. A minister in the Bible Christian Church in Salford as well as a prominent public figure in Manchester (he became the MP for Salford following the Reform bill), Brotherton combined “middle class radicalism and passionate concern for the poor” (Lineham 313), campaigning to reform the poor laws, factory conditions, and working hours for children. He confirmed his support of the working classes by subscribing to a fund for the victims of the Peterloo Massacre of August 1819, at which dozens of pro-democracy protesters were killed, and hundreds injured, for demanding an extension of the suffrage (Shapely, n.p.). When other churches shunned supporters of Henry Hunt and the Peterloo survivors, Brotherton’s Christ Church kept its doors open, proving “the genuineness of Bible Christian identity with the poor” (Lineham 316). It was only a few months before Peterloo, in April 1819, that Brotherton sent his response to Luckcock. His intention, as he stated in his letter, was to help Luckcock “form some idea of the principles we profess and our mode of living” (*MR*, May 1819, 313). The two events, a discussion of flesh abstinence as a way of life and the slaughter of humans at a political protest, may seem unrelated, but for the Bible Christians of Manchester, their diet and their politics were inseparable.

Indeed, the dissemination a vegetable diet would, for its advocates, have rendered the violence of the Peterloo unthinkable. Citing Cowherd’s “Facts Authentic in Science and Religion,” Brotherton told Luckcock that animal food not only compromised one’s health, but also exerted “a bad moral tendency in brutalizing the passions, weakening the rational powers, and blunting every humane feeling” (313). On Cowherdite philosophy, a temperate regimen

pacified the body and enlightened the mind. For instance, Brotherton, a student of the Cowherd, told Luckcock that “a vegetable diet and sober habits are conducive to health of the body and enjoyment of the mind” (314). But I want to point out that the reasons Brotherton gave in support of his diet were not entirely self-interested or focused on human benefits. As Brotherton further told Luckcock, “religion, humanity, reason, and experience are all in favour of the principle that we have no right to kill for our ‘*daily bread*,’ but that fruit and vegetables are the natural food of man” (313). His argument in favour of “the natural food of man” suggests a democratic impulse insofar as it recognized an essential equality among “men.” In the early eighteenth century, artisans and the working classes did not regularly consume meat, subsisting on cheaper carbohydrates. Brotherton, however, argues that, regardless of class position, all were designed for the same “natural food.” Perhaps more radically, Brotherton levelled the hierarchy among species: “we have no right to kill for our ‘*daily bread*’” (313), a sentiment with which Luckcock agreed. As he argued in his letter, “[t]he gift of life comes equally from the same common Parent” (312). Religious sentiment, scientific reason, and the discourse of rights coalesced in order to contest inter- and intra-species tyranny. Together, Luckcock and Brotherton presented an abstinent diet as an egalitarian diet, fitting it within the *Monthly Repository*’s opposition to prejudice and unjust authority. As Luckcock argued, “[w]e hold the shedding of blood much too cheaply” (312), whether human or nonhuman.

In his reply to Luckcock, Brotherton articulated “the principles we profess and our mode of living” (313), but also appended a series of the print materials: “a Vegetable Cookery Book, a Hymn Book, and the first part of a work entitled ‘Facts, authentic in Science and Religion,’ by the late Mr. Cowherd” (313). The significantly different genres that Brotherton mailed Luckcock each served a slightly different function—doctrinal, spiritual, and practical—within the Cowherdite community. The “first part” of Cowherd’s work of Biblical exegesis, “Facts Authentic in Science

and Religion,” contained a section titled “On Food” that theorized the chapel’s scriptural and scientific reasons for abstaining from flesh by juxtaposing quotations from the Bible with passages from natural history. The Bible Christian hymnbook, by contrast, served a social purpose, constructing a collective identity. For instance, one of Cowherd’s hymns, which the *Vegetarian Advocate* republished in 1848 (figure ii), quotes liberally from Oliver Goldsmith’s “The Hermit,” but with a crucial difference: whereas Goldsmith’s Hermit speaks in the first person singular, Cowherd’s hymn makes use of the plural. It brought cohesion to the flock of vegetarians by constructing a collective subject that defined itself through its opposition to the flesh-eating world. When sung in unison, this hymn about “*Our* food” (10) created a tangible image of unity within the group and of difference from outsiders. Carving out a moral distinction between abstainers and flesh-eaters, or between our “guiltless feast” (6) and their cruel slaughter, the hymn reinforces the sense of community that, according to Thompson and Gilbert, dissenting sects offered “the uprooted and abandoned people of the Industrial Revolution” (Thompson 417; Gilbert 89-92). However, whereas the workingclass subjects of Methodist and other dissenting sects appealed to the Lord for pity on behalf of themselves (Gilbert 92), the Bible Christians extended God’s mercy to another exploited group of beings: livestock. As the Bible Christians sang, “Taught by that Power that pities us, / We learn to pity them” (3-4). The slaughter of the innocent lamb in the poem draws on conventional Christian symbolism to highlight the growing disconnection between eating and killing that came with urban existence. City dwellers have fewer opportunities to raise and slaughter animals themselves; hence, much the way the unrepentant fail to acknowledge that Christ (the lamb of God) died for their sins, those who eat flesh no longer “behold the lambkin die” (11) or “feel” themselves as “the cause” of its death (12). This

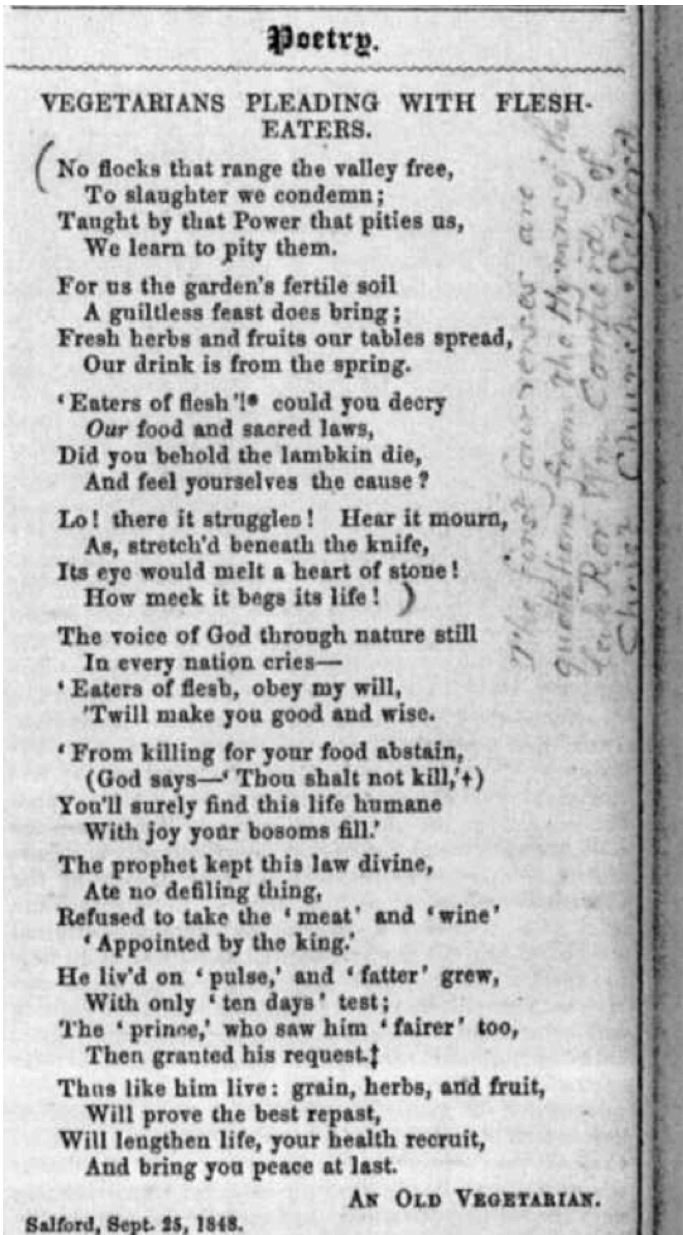


Figure ii: "Vegetarians Plead With Flesh-Eaters," a poem from the *Vegetarian Advocate*, October 1848, 44. Undated marginalia identifies the first four verses of the poem as "quotations from the Hymns of the Rev. Wm of Cowherd, Christ Church, Salford." *Vegetarian Society Archives*.

desire for a "guiltless feast" (6) in an age of industrial capitalism, may also betray the unease of some vegetarians who, like Brotherton, were themselves mill owners profiting from Manchester. The "guiltless feast" articulated a fantasy of painless production and consumption, in which the "garden's fertile soil" (5) brings forth a banquet, while the herbs and fruits spread themselves out

on the table, without any human or nonhuman labour (5-7). The vegetarian ethic was to consume non-violently, to dine on the spontaneous produce of nature rather than the tortured lambkin.

However, fruits and vegetables do not in fact spread themselves out on the table. Hence Brotherton included a “Vegetable Cookery Book,” which complemented the doctrinal texts by providing instructions on how to conduct the sect’s new way of life. Compiled by Joseph Brotherton’s wife, Mrs. Brotherton, this “Vegetable Cookery Book” alerts us to the significance of domestic management in the vegetarian movement. The middleclass ideology of separate spheres influenced how vegetarianism was practiced and promoted, but vegetarians, particularly women, also used the moral importance attributed to the home for their own ends. The development of vegetarianism into a social reform movement required the active involvement of women, who adopted the principles and made them their own. Indeed, how would vegetarianism have progressed without Mrs. Brotherton’s “Vegetable Cookery Book”? Published anonymously at first, it was soon canonized by the vegetarian movement as a foundational text. It enabled members to follow the dietary system, overcome opposition in their homes, and shape themselves into practicing abstainers; it made possible a process of self-transformation.

Thus, on the one hand, the society professed universal principles that applied to all humans, but, on the other hand, it cultivated an unorthodox way of life, one that demarcated the sect from wider society. A fleshless diet represented “the natural food of man” (May 1819, 313), but Brotherton also claimed it as “*our* mode of living” (313, my emphasis), just as the hymn claimed it as “*Our* food” (emphasis in the original), implying a degree of exclusivity and separatism. The sect’s manner of inhabiting the world was not shared or understood by outsiders; nor, indeed, did many outsiders, with the exception of Luckcock, find it an attractive way of living. Adherents to the regimen took its very undesirability and rigorous discipline as a further sign of its exclusivity and moral superiority.



To return to their correspondence, the letters between Brotherton to Luckcock reveal the networks of that flesh abstainers established among themselves. But, as an act of communication that moved beyond the borders of the sect, the letters between Brotherton, an insider, and, Luckcock, an outsider, also lay bare the tension between “the world within” and “the world without” (Thompson 32). Thus, as I have indicated, what I find significant about the exchange between Brotherton and Luckcock are not their arguments and rationales for their “mode of life” (313), but the way in which Luckcock framed them for the external audience of the *Monthly Repository*. In his brief introduction to the letters, he presented his request for their publication to the editor, Robert Aspland:

Should you think the subject of the following recent correspondence comes within the scope of your Miscellany, the letters are not merely at your service, but you will much oblige me by their insertion; and thereby I hope [to] excite the attention of some other of your friends and produce other contributions. (May 1819, 312)

At play in Luckcock’s desire to publish his letters was not simply the progress of flesh abstinence, but the function of the medium in which the letters appeared, the periodical press. Luckcock appealed to the liberal view of the press as a forum for public debate, one in which readers became contributors. Note the way describes his objective: to “excite attention” and “produce other contributions.” His aim was to start the conversation, not finish it: advocating abstinence from flesh was, for him, not about telling others what to eat, but about engaging their participation. Exploiting the genre of the “Miscellany,” a multi-authored and open-ended symposium that admitted different opinions, became a critical strategy both for bringing vegetarianism to a wider public and for making new vegetarians—critical because it transformed the audience of vegetarian propaganda into its participants. For Luckcock, disseminating abstinence from animal food began not as monologue, but as dialogue that relied on the heteroglossia of the periodical. Luckcock did not advance a conclusive, unassailable statement on

dietetics or animals' rights; instead, he left it open to "friends" and "worthy contributors" to discuss what he considered "an important and extensive moral question" (312). Such was his faith in the press and public sphere that he believed he did not need to convince others. They would convince themselves through rational discussion. Luckcock opened up pathways of identification and self-fashioning by inviting others to contribute to the journal. He thus envisioned the periodical, and not himself, as the agent of advocacy. Effacing himself, he foregrounded the medium and its contributors. As he further wrote to the editor,

That the system hereby recommended will gain ground, as the principles are better understood, can hardly admit of doubt; and, in the course of moral improvement, it may be no unreasonable anticipation, that it will in its turn be the fashionable topic of public zeal. I shall not now attempt any vindication of it, nor do I pledge myself either to future silence or reply; but I hope it may be noticed by some of your worthy contributors, and I shall be better satisfied to leave it in their hands; attention to the subject and not to myself is the motive. (May 1819, 313)

Vegetarianism did not become a social movement or the "fashionable topic of public zeal" during Luckcock's lifetime, not until the formation of the VS in 1847. The point here is not simply that Luckcock anticipated its rise, or that he held unwavering confidence in its progress; rather, I am stressing the way in which Luckcock used the participatory genre of the periodical in order to build a print-based community and invite readers into the creation of vegetarianism. This involved, as Luckcock suggests, a gesture of relinquishment, of "leav[ing] it in their hands," which presents us with a succinct image of how vegetarianism was defined and disseminated through the nineteenth-century press. Advocating vegetarianism required a continual balance between consolidating an identity and handing it over to others—others who would, inevitably, make it their own. Resolute abstainers such as Luckcock and Brotherton may have wrought their own social practice, which Brotherton claimed as "our mode of life" (313), but, when recommending it to others, they had to let it go—that is, they had to let outsiders and newcomers take it up,

practice it in new contexts, and give it new meaning. The progress of vegetarianism depended upon its appropriation by others. In writing to the *Monthly Repository*, Luckcock dramatized this act of relinquishment and self-effacement, the way in which vegetarianism, as a culinary practice and identity, was passed along, repeated, reinterpreted, and transformed. No one individual was responsible for creating or originating vegetarianism; it was shaped through the sociality of eating, speaking, and reading. Luckcock suggests as much when he claims that his motive is to draw attention “to the subject and not to [him]self” (313). Hence, my argument is that the dissemination of vegetarianism imitated the medium through which it was communicated: much the way the *Monthly Repository* and other journals created themselves from readers’ contributions, vegetarianism too worked by turning its audience into “worthy contributors,” individuals who would not only learn the diet’s principles, but practice them, develop them, and take them forward. This iteration of vegetarianism necessarily brought changes to its practice and meaning over time. The “system hereby recommended,” or, as it became known, “the Vegetarian system,” was never a fully formed or static system in the nineteenth century, but was in constant flux. Indeed, no active culinary tradition is fixed in time; nor do food habits emerge *ex nihilo*. Rather, they are formed relationally, and vegetarianism was worked and reworked over time.

In 1834, Luckcock published *Practical Economy*, a guide to home management. Luckcock at the time was on his deathbed, and this text represented his final opportunity to advocate a vegetable diet, an opportunity he again declined to take. After displaying the expenses for a family of four in which butcher’s meat was the costliest item next to rent, Luckcock commented,

The writer would here fain have entered and enlarged upon his favourite subject, so closely connected with economy—that of a “vegetable diet”—to the entire exclusion of every article that the benevolent Creator endued with sensation and enjoyment. But he is well aware that his good intentions are liable to misrepresentation, as being desirous of bringing the poor to the lowest possible scale of subsistence. He will say no more than that, during nearly the last thirty years, he has, from his own voluntary choice, totally abstained from animal food; and his medical friends agree, that he has probably much

prolonged his life by the sacrifice. The gratification arising from a consciousness of humanity towards his inferior fellow-creatures, is best known to his own heart. (16)

The “vegetable diet” remains Luckcock’s “favourite subject,” but he draws attention to it by claiming he would rather not draw attention to it, recognizing that the subject would alienate his readers. His reluctance suggests that, by the conclusion of his life, he had become less sanguine on the prospects of making his practice the “fashionable subject of public zeal” (313). Perhaps at this point he was aware that his previous attempts in the *Monthly Repository* had received no positive replies. A search through the following issues reveals that Luckcock’s “important and extensive moral question” did not “excite the attention” of readers or generate a conversation. In *Practical Economy*, he attempts no further vindication of his diet; instead, he offers himself as an aged and isolated example of the long life and moral satisfaction that result from showing humanity to one’s fellow creatures. If the objective of a social movement is “to bring a set of issues or grievances to be heard, recognized, and addressed in the public sphere” (DiCenzo 39), then we can only say that Luckcock’s efforts represented a timid, hesitant movement. An organized effort had to wait for Brotherton and his fellow Manchester reformers to found a Vegetarian Society, an organization specifically devoted to advancing the cause of total abstinence from flesh.

## Pastoral Power and the Periodical Press: Conduct, Counter-Conduct, and the Vegetarian Society's Care of the Self.

There are two propositions which it will be my duty to bring under your notice. The first is, that we hold that animal food is not necessary for the sustenance of human life;—that it is not only unnecessary, but that it is really prejudicial to health. And the second, that man can be sustained better by fruit, vegetables, and farinaceous diet. This is pointed out by nature herself, and it is important that we should endeavour to imbibe these principles, that they may govern our future conduct. [...] By precept and by example we would teach the true principles of self-government.

—Joseph Brotherton, M.P. for Salford, speaking as Chairman of the First Annual Meeting of the Vegetarian Society, 1848.

Rest assured this vegetarian system, resting pre-eminently upon facts, must be tried before it can be fully understood. [...] It rises higher, it sinks deeper, than all your moral and philanthropic movements of the day. (Hear, hear.) It embraces all these; it is friendly to them, it loves them. They are part of a system, but it has a broader basis, and has a whole system in itself. It is not merely mercy to mankind, but it is mercy to all suffering creation. (Hear, hear, and applause.)

—James Simpson, President, addressing the assembly at the Second Annual Meeting of the Vegetarian Society, 1849.

In October 2011, I visited the archives of the Vegetarian Society (VS) in Altrincham, Greater Manchester, to carry out research for this dissertation. With materials dating back to the early nineteenth century, the VS's collection holds complete runs of its official organs, the *Vegetarian Advocate* (1848-1851) and its successor, the *Vegetarian Messenger* (1849-), as well as issues of its pamphlets, treatises, cookbooks, and other ephemera on humane dietetics. Rather than mine these materials for information on the history of vegetarianism in England, I read them as cultural agents in themselves, analyzing the relationship between their serial print forms and the habitual models of self-government they sought to promote. By examining the appearance, layout, form, and commercial strategies of vegetarian advocacy journals, I hope not only to provide an interpretation of the texts themselves, but also to contribute to the wider field of periodical studies. Press scholarship can help us understand the emergence of the vegetarian movement, but

the VS can also tell us much about the importance of print media in forging material practices, collective identities, tastes, and social activism in the nineteenth century.

Formed in 1847 by a group of health reformers, humanitarians, and Bible Christians, the VS took shape as a conversionist social movement, a movement predicated on the belief that individuals had to change their lives and themselves. Although they often spoke a secular language of diet and physiology, vegetarians placed the evangelical experience of conversion at the centre of their movement.<sup>4</sup> And, like many religious movements, the VS remained invested in the agency of texts to effect individual moral conversions; the society published voluminously, issuing tracts, pamphlets, its own official organs, and, of course, a variety cookbooks to fit different budgets. The vegetarian movement seized upon the idea, promoted by evangelicals, domestic managers, and entrepreneurial publishers, that a book could govern daily life.

The VS and its publications did not directly govern or control others. Rather, as Joseph Brotherton claims in the epigraph to this chapter, they taught self-government. Before its advocates could convert others to vegetarianism, they first had to govern themselves: they had to subject themselves to the law of abstinence and live according to its principles, using their own conduct as an example to outsiders. Vegetarians put themselves on display, and this dissertation is about the constitution of the self-governing vegetarian subject. Despite the confidence with which Brotherton propounded his “two propositions” (“Report” 3) on human health and diet, he and the VS did not—indeed, could not—make people into vegetarians, or enforce abstinence from flesh. Rather, creating vegetarians—that is, convincing individuals to take up the practice and, crucially, identify as vegetarians—entailed cultivating autonomous and voluntaristic subjects, a task for which the periodical as a genre was, I contend, well suited. Throughout this dissertation, I

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<sup>4</sup> For the characteristics of the Evangelical revival, see Bebbington, Gilbert, and Davidoff and Hall. For a discussion of the relationship between the evangelical revival and social reform, see Claybaugh.

examine the participatory media strategies that the VS developed to promote the agency and involvement of its readers and members, enlisting them in the dual project of reforming themselves and society. Correspondence columns, public banquets, debates, tea meetings, and evening soirees all demanded the regular participation of members of the VS and led to the development of a vegetarian identity. The VS advocated what it termed “this vegetarian system,” telling its readers and new converts what to eat, but, as James Simpson (1812-1859) emphasizes in my second epigraph, the system “must be tried before it can be fully understood” (*VA*, Aug. 1849, 150). Simpson called upon his audience to “try it experimentally to know its value” (150). The VS depended on the participation of its members and readers. While the abstract “system” dictated that one abstain from fish, flesh, and fowl, the actual practice developed and changed through a social process, a dialogue among its advocates and its practitioners. The emergence of the vegetarian subject as a governed and self-governing being offers a critical site to examine the forces of governmentality in everyday life.

Why, we might want to ask, did individuals agree to reform themselves and become vegetarians? Why did people subject themselves to a strict injunction—abstinence from flesh—that isolated them socially and obstructed them from breaking bread with others? In addition to its oft-cited moral, religious, economic, physiological, and humanitarian explanations, the VS’s appeal may have resided in its combination of strict discipline with openness and freedom. The VS defined a vegetarian as anyone, who, for whatever reason (health, humanity, religion, or economy, for example) abstained from animals as food. A vegetarian, then, at least in theory, could be anyone at all, and anyone could be a vegetarian for any reason at all. In 1906, William Axon noted in his sixty-year history of the VS that, since its foundation, “the test of membership has been the purely negative one of abstinence” (*Sixty Years* 6). One did not have to subscribe to a particular doctrine to become a vegetarian. Abstinence was the only criterion for membership,

but, I want to suggest, vegetarianism was not “purely negative” (6) It was also productive: abstinence was an enabling constraint that made possible the invention an alternative ethics of self-care, and allowed its practitioners to create themselves. Vegetarianism was founded on an absence—the negative act of abstinence—and thus it presented a blank slate that individual practitioners filled in and developed; in doing so, they re-made themselves. In 1848, the category of “vegetarianism,” the cultural practice and identity, was inchoate. Part of its appeal lay in its incompleteness; it was malleable, empty, and open to interpretation. Vegetarianism, as a practice and way of being, had to be invented, and vegetarians had to define, or redefine, the meaning of an absence: because a lack of meat on the table conventionally signified deprivation and poverty, the VS had to re-signify the meaning of this absence, framing it as a rational choice, and, crucially, an identity. The VS created new converts by inviting them into this process of producing vegetarianism. Individuals adopted the practice and made it their own. In their narratives of conversion, new adherents described their transformation from sickness to health, relating how they saved themselves through their practice of the diet. Even when following the prescriptive instructions of a recipe one can make substitutions, omissions, and changes, claiming ownership of the practice. The dissemination of vegetarianism required that its converts be experimental, curious agents. My aim is not to celebrate or recover the free, autonomous agency of flesh-abstainers, but to analyse how vegetarian print media developed forms of agency to further its reform agenda. The VS created new vegetarian subjects not by prohibiting flesh, but by opening up avenues for self-transformation.

On the one hand, advocating self-government was strategic. Although the VS petitioned in 1891 against the transatlantic cattle trade, it conventionally operated through moral suasion and the diffusion of information rather than legislative action. Within the free-market of nineteenth-century liberalism, one could not tell the freeborn Englishman what to eat or not to eat.



Vegetarianism was thus limited to presenting itself as a freely taken choice, not an imposition. Its advocates worked at fitting it within the ethos of self-improvement, often presenting it as a utilitarian calculation that would lead to socially beneficial results.

One the other hand, a widespread belief persisted in the animal rights and vegetarian movements that legal reform was not sufficient by itself; social reform had to change individuals themselves, not just laws that governed them. In the conclusion to his treatise, *Animals' Rights*, the humanitarian, Henry Salt, presented the legislative protection of animals as “the supplement and sequel” to the more important work of moral progress and education: “Legislation is the record, the register, of the moral sense of the community; it follows, not precedes, the development of that moral sense” (*Animals' Rights*, 124). For Salt, political reform must go hand-in-hand with the reform of individuals or what he called self-reform. In the *Food Reform Magazine*, the journal of the London Food Reform Society, he acknowledged that a vegetarian diet “could not in itself improve the conditions of the poor” (*FRM*, Jan. 1884, 69), conceding that legislative changes too were needed. But he nonetheless contended that he and his audience would also have to learn to “reform ourselves” (69). He thus called for “self-reform *and* reform, not self-reform *or* reform” (*Logic*, 104). Vegetarians pursued the transformation of themselves and the formation of new identities, attempting to change social relations directly through what they ate rather than through legal or political measures.

Thus, it is important to note that while all social movements in some way stand in opposition to wider society or convention, vegetarians first had to wrestle with themselves—with their own habits and tastes, and with the foundational distinction between human and nonhuman life. They used the serial rhythms of the periodical press to cultivate new ways of living, and to strengthen the resolve of new recruits, insulating them from the influence of friends, family, and their own lingering appetites. As Brian Harrison argues, in a world hostile to reform, nineteenth-

century pressure groups had “to devote as much energy to preserving their membership as extending it” (129). Consolidation was as important as expansion. Harrison, speaking of reformers generally, argues that,

whereas conservative and traditional values are continuously emphasised as a matter of daily, weekly, annual or generational routine—through formal occasions, ceremonial, recurring anniversaries and family functions—reformers needed to reinforce themselves with processions, propaganda, campaigns, and crusades. (286)

Among reforming movements of the nineteenth century, the vegetarians had a particular need to institute their own calendar of events and ceremonies. In the nineteenth century, what stood at the centre of traditional routines, feast days, and formal occasions was the body of an animal; animals were what we might call, to repurpose Harrison, the “*matter* of daily, weekly, annual or generational routine,” the connective tissue that united and sustained the Poovian social body. The sacrifice of animals, as a requisite cultural touchstone, consolidated traditional values and social structures.

In advocating for food reform, vegetarians contested not only the conservatism of tradition, but also the emerging commodity culture of the Victorian period. As Catherine Waters summarizes, “the development of commodity culture in the nineteenth century is distinguished by the way in which objects, once detached from those who made them, come to represent qualities of the consumer, and to acquire a sign-value over and above their use-value” (31). In the food politics of the nineteenth century, meat exceeded its nutritional worth or use-value and operated as an ideological myth of Englishness, buttressing hierarchies of gender, class and race; it divided the starch-based masses from the animal-protein elite. Surveying the diet and desires of the working classes in the early nineteenth century, E.P. Thompson noted the ideological grip of meat: “[m]eat, like wheat, involved feelings of status over and above its dietary value. The Roast

Beef of Old England was the artisan's pride and the aspiration of the labourer" (349).<sup>5</sup> Detached from the animal bodies that produced it, meat signified the consumers who ate it; this signification remained constant throughout the century. In an editorial from 1885, for example, the *Times* argued that "Vegetarianism is hardly a system that can be taken seriously in England" (9) because both the wealthy and the working classes "regard a large expenditure on butcher's meat as the sign and best results of prosperity" (9). A culturally entrenched symbol, meat signified capital, as the *Times* demonstrated with a brief anecdote:

'How's business?' asked a gentleman some time ago of a small furniture-broker in a country town. 'Capital, Sir' was the answer. 'Me and my children ate seventy pounds of meat last week!'" (*Times*, 13 Jan. 1885, 9).

In the language of the middleclass salesman, meat stands in for success, substituting for an answer on the question of business. He need not say, *business is well*; he need only say, *we ate meat*.<sup>6</sup> As the *Times* commented, meat was not only the result, but also the sign, of prosperity; eating meat signified one's standard of living in the nineteenth century. To eat it regularly was to embody success; it turned the process of materializing the body into a social performance. As Henry Salt argued, "[t]o consume much flesh is regarded as the sign and symbol of well being—witness the popular English manner of keeping the festival of Christmas" (*Logic* 76). But, while meat eating took on symbolic value, the animal itself disappeared, forgotten and removed from sight. Marx would term this process commodity fetishism: the furniture-broker sees only the exchange value of the object (meat), without seeing the (human and nonhuman) relations embodied in it.

In rejecting meat's sign-value, the VS might appear to take an anti-consumerist stance,<sup>7</sup> but it too followed the logic of consumerism insofar as vegetarians used the liberal choice to

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<sup>5</sup> Timothy Morton similarly argues that the working class "demand for red meat and fine white bread, as opposed to potatoes, represented a demand not only for satisfaction but respect" ("Consumption" 4).

<sup>6</sup> Engels used the presence or absence of meat in the diets of the working classes to construct a descending scale of social status, from "the better paid workers" who dined on "meat daily and bacon and cheese for supper" to the poorer labourers who ate it two or three times per week, to the Irish, "on the lowest round of the ladder," who ate only potatoes (107). Hence, the ability to eat meat regularly signified progress on the social ladder while it also distinguished the civilized English from the animalized Irish.

<sup>7</sup> For an "anticapitalist" (31) reading of Henry David Thoreau's vegetarianism in *Walden*, see Neely.

consume, or not to consume, to stylize their existence; their banquets of vegetables too operated as signs of their identity above and beyond their use-value. Furthermore, to intervene in the cultural conversation on food, the VS became invested in producing one Victorian print culture's newest commodities: information. The VS was not a charity or paternalistic institution that distributed food, soup, and aid to the poor; rather, its aim was the circulation of texts and information on diet. As Amanda Claybaugh argues, "[w]hile charity takes place between donor and recipient, reform takes place within an individual's own heart and mind. For this reason, its central locus is the scene of reading" (25). Claybaugh suggests that print culture made possible an inner moral conversion, a change of heart that was necessary for social reform to take place. She focuses on the sympathetic identifications solicited by novels, but, in the nineteenth century, the press was an equally significant mechanism of identification that cultivated the "imagined connections" (25) of reformist communities.

From its formation in 1847 onward, the VS exhibited an evangelical faith in the power of texts to effect moral conversions. Indeed, much of its activism derived from the evangelical repertoire of collective action.<sup>8</sup> As its first journal, the *Vegetarian Advocate*, told readers, vegetarianism was "Christian in its aims" (Sept. 1848, 23) and "strictly *Christian* in its operation" (Dec. 1848, 64). It was Christian in its aims because it worked to make converts; it was Christian in its operations because, like the earlier religious revivals, the vegetarian movement relied on its rank and file members to make converts and distribute literature. The *Vegetarian Advocate* called upon its readers, as the bearers of the vegetable gospel, to save others just as they had been saved. In a report on the movement's progress from 1848, the editors of the *Vegetarian Advocate* addressed readers in the plural first person, yoking the collective vegetarian identity to the moral

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<sup>8</sup> In the *Novel of Purpose*, Claybaugh details the influence of the Evangelical Revival on social reform, including food reform, in Britain and the United States (21-30).

obligation to evangelize: “We are, as Vegetarians, in possession of that knowledge which has greatly increased our happiness, and it behoves us, therefore, freely to communicate to others what we have ourselves so happily received” (Dec. 1848, 64). The VS wanted converts who would in turn make converts of others; however, in addition to reiterating the duty to communicate the happy benefits of the diet, the VS also called attention to new print forms available for doing so: “Added to these efforts [of individuals], we have now increasing facilities for disseminating knowledge by the distribution of the *Vegetarian Advocate*, the *Vegetarian Tracts*, and other publications within our reach” (Dec 1848, 64-5). The establishment of vegetarian periodicals, a series of vegetarian tracts, and the penny post opened up new possibilities for the expansion of the VS, while these media also created new avenues for readers to engage with the movement.<sup>9</sup> The penny post in particular allowed vegetarians to sustain affective ties across the nation. The VS did not use the penny post and periodical press simply to transmit information on its diet; it embraced these modern media to situate itself within the emerging nineteenth-century culture of information. The VS self-consciously allied itself with the nineteenth century’s knowledge industry and communication revolution to represent itself as a modern, rational way of life.

The vegetarians’ dissemination of their heterodox dietary regimen thus rested heavily on new media technologies. In the first issue of the *Vegetarian Advocate*, the editors acknowledged and celebrated their indebtedness to the press and the penny post, noting the close relationship among cheap print, the diffusion of useful knowledge, and the creation of a mass readership: “we rejoice that a thirst for knowledge has become so general among the masses of the people, and that the modern inventions of cheap printing and cheap postage have providentially supplied us with the

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<sup>9</sup> The *Vegetarian Advocate* appeared in 1848, and the *Vegetarian Messenger*, which succeeded the *Vegetarian Advocate* as the Society’s official organ, in 1849. In addition to these monthly periodicals, the VS published a series of Vegetarian Tracts, while it also frequently re-issued vegetarian treatises, such as John Smith’s *Fruits and Farinacea: The Proper Food of Man* (1845), Sylvester Graham’s *Lectures on the Science of Human Life* (1839), and Martha Brotherton’s *Vegetable Cookery, By a Lady* (1812).

means of gratifying this improved taste” (Sept. 1848, 22). The VS used cheap print and cheap postage not only to gratify an improved taste, but also to create new tastes. Applying the discourse of useful knowledge to the care of the body, it linked reading to eating, consuming knowledge to consuming food: improved tastes for knowledge would lead to improved taste for food. I suggest not only that cheap print and cheap postage made possible the organization of the vegetarian movement, but also that these “modern inventions” (22) were central to the representational strategies of vegetarianism. Vegetarianism wanted to be seen as a modern innovation allied with the forces of progress.

Hence, while the VS was “Christian in its aims” and “operations,” it was not always explicitly Christian in its message. Founded at the end of the hungry forties, a time when, as it told readers, “the labouring population of this country are suffering for want of food” (“Report” 20), the VS stressed its material, economic, and physiological advantages when addressing the flesh-eating public. It promoted its diet as the answer to what was becoming known as the food question—the question of how to feed a rapidly growing and urbanizing population. In the preface to the first volume of the *Vegetarian Advocate*, the editors admitted that, although “the humane idea [...] pervades the Vegetarian Principle,” humaneness had not proven “all-sufficient” in “our endeavours to diffuse our principles” (“Preface” n.p.). In an age dominated by “the material and statistical details” of science, trade, and commerce, the diffusion of vegetarianism required “something more [...] than the predominance of human sentiment [...] something more would be needed to insure public favour and acceptance” (“Preface” n.p.). The vegetarians, establishing their organization in industrial Manchester, recognized that they had to tailor their arguments to their audience and to the times in which they were living: “in a material and commercial age we must have material and commercial advantages” (“Preface”). This preface to the *Vegetarian Advocate* thus reveals a strategic disconnection between “the humane idea which

pervade[ed]” the vegetable diet and the rationales vegetarians used to advocate it in public: while many founding members identified with humanitarianism, religious sentiments, and benevolence to animals, they spoke the language of hard facts in their conversations with outsiders, adopting the rhetoric of “the material and commercial age” that dominated the national conversation on social issues. The VS shifted its representational strategies, disseminating the humane sentiment of vegetarianism through the language of science, statistics, and the market economy.

### **Pastoral Vegetarianism and The Establishment of the Vegetarian Society**

*The shepherd is someone who feeds and who feeds directly, or at any rate, he is someone who feeds the flock by leading it to good pastures, and then by making sure that the animals eat and are properly fed. Pastoral power is the power of care.*

—Michel Foucault, *Security Territory Population*.

Aiming to dislodge entrenched cultural attitudes toward food, health, the body, and nonhuman animals, the VS formally constituted itself on the thirtieth of September 1847 (Axon 2). Joseph Brotherton, the first M.P. for Salford following the Reform Act of 1832, chaired the inaugural meeting, while James Simpson, the VS’s benefactor, stood as its first president. Other key figures from the organization’s formative years include Henry Stephens Clubb, an itinerant lecturer, John Smith, the author of *Fruits and Farinacea: The Proper Food of Man* (1845), William Metcalfe, a medical doctor and preacher in the Bible Christian Church, and William Horsell, the VS’s first Secretary and the publisher of its journal, the *Vegetarian Advocate*. Brotherton, Metcalfe, Simpson, and many other founding members of the VS emerged from the Bible Christian Church, the religious community in Manchester whose pastor, the Reverend William Cowherd (1763-1816), introduced abstinence from flesh and alcohol as criteria for membership in 1809. On Cowherd’s theology, body and soul were contiguous; thus, the care of the body, through abstinence from flesh and alcohol, made possible a pure spirit, refined mind, and humane temperament (Lineham 320). His

abstinence from the flesh of animals was motivated by a desire to mortify the body and free the spirit from materiality. The irony of Cowherd's legacy is that his anti-materialism (his belief that the body hindered the development of the soul) produced a social movement that was preoccupied with the body. For Cowherd's disciples, political and social reform began with the most basic and fundamental act of subsistence, that is, with the materialization of the flesh through food. The foundation of the VS brought the Bible Christian spirit of religious and dietary dissent together with a secular project of social reform.

For the eclectic group of dissenters, radicals, teetotalers, and hydropaths who founded the VS in 1847, vegetarianism was pastoral, a term I use specifically in reference to Michel Foucault's work on governmentality. Foucault, as is well known, premises the art of government, an art of conducting the conduct of others, on a pastoral metaphor, the metaphor of a shepherd who guides his flock to its proper pasture. Pastoral power, a technology of power created by Christianity, is "the power of care" (*Security* 127): its primary objective is the salvation of the flock, a salvation that first of all means subsistence (126-7, 167). While it originated within Christian institutions, in the eighteenth century pastoral power diffused throughout society, becoming "progressively governmentalized" and "brought under the auspices of state institutions" ("Subject" 783, 793). Pastoral power, Foucault argues, was the prelude to governmentality, or the activity of governing others (*Security* 165): pastoral techniques, particularly the confession, spread gradually from the Church into state governments, penal institutions, and the life sciences. Importantly, however, this "new pastoral power" was not the exclusive property of the state; rather, Foucault makes sure to add that it was also "exercised by private ventures, welfare societies, benefactors, and generally by philanthropists" (784). A whole new body of independent and competing pastors arose in the nineteenth century to care for the social body: public health inspectors, social reformers, physicians, and charitable organizations. With this intensification and



multiplication of pastoral power relations, salvation took on new meanings and earthly objectives: health, well-being, security, and protection (“Subject,” 784).

Voluntary associations and reform societies constituted a defining feature of the British pastoral state in the nineteenth century; they took on the role of caring for the population. As Davidoff and Hall argue, voluntary societies allowed middle-class men to consolidate their economic interests and moral authority in the public sphere (Davidoff and Hall 416). Lacking the prescriptive force of the law, these associations placed external pressure on parliament and targeted civil society, moral behaviour, and health-related issues such as sanitation. In doing so, they served as a supplement to state power (Claybaugh 23). According to Lauren Goodlad, Britons identified as a nation of self-governing, autonomous individuals, a belief that derived from the English tradition of protestant dissent, laissez-faire economics, romantic individualism, and enlightenment rationality (3). As a result, they resisted any imposition of the state into private life; the British state itself, in contrast to continental governments, remained comparatively small in the nineteenth century, relying on “the voluntarism of the Victorians themselves” (6). Rejecting Foucault’s study of the panopticon, Goodlad argues that his later work on pastoral power and governmentality provides a more accurate lens through which to study “the self-consciously liberal society” of Victorian England (Goodlad 17-18). Oz Frankel concurs: complete panoptic surveillance was an ideal never achieved by the state (3). The English ruling classes strove to govern indirectly through self-help, philanthropy, and volunteerism rather than state intervention (Goodlad 12). Lacking a large centralized bureaucracy, the English state did not directly control behavior; rather, voluntary societies, philanthropists, and private citizens carried out the functions of government (7). As Goodlad concludes, this strategy of pastorship—the act of guiding, managing, and acting upon the free agency of others—preoccupied British nineteenth-century commentators on the role of government: “what seems clear, then, is that for Victorian and

Edwardian Britons, pastorship was not a legacy of early-modern history, but a vexing contemporary issue” (20).

In this dissertation on nineteenth-century vegetarianism, I draw on Goodlad’s reading of Victorian liberal pastorship, but I also follow the Foucauldian metaphor of pastoral power to its dietary conclusions, examining how a combination of social reform, the periodical press, and the emerging science of nutrition established feeding and caring for the body not simply as a metaphor for government, but as a contested site of individual self-government and the biopolitical management of the population. What I want to emphasize here is the word, *pastor*, which serves as the point of departure for Foucault’s thinking about governmentality and biopolitics: the *pastor*, from the Latin, means *the feeder*. The pastor feeds: he is the shepherd who feeds the flock, or, more specifically, he feeds by directing the sheep to their appropriate food, guiding them to safe pastures, and making sure, as Foucault says, “that the animals eat and are properly fed” (*Security* 127). The act of feeding animals thus underpins Foucault’s model of governing humans (*Security* 364). To determine when, how, and what another being eats emerges as the foundational metaphor to describe “a highly specific form of power” (*Security* 194): not legal or political power, but power as the conduct of conduct, or the art of government.

While Foucault adopts the figure of “pastoral power” to explain the objectives of government, the VS, which, let us not forget, traces its origins to a man named Cowherd, took on the shepherd’s role quite literally: its objective was to feed and cultivate a flock of vegetarians, leading them toward a secular salvation. The vegetable heresy assumed the task of conducting men and women in their daily lives, leading them away from their faith in butcher’s meat and toward healthier, greener pastures. The VS therefore offers a critical site to analyze the development and intersection of what I describe as modern pastoral agencies—nutritional science, brand-name foods, advertising, commercial cookbooks, and domestic magazines—all of

which seek to govern people by influencing how they feed and care for their bodies. Drawing on Foucault's theory of power as conduct and Judith Butler's theory of bodies that matter, I contend that power feeds: it materializes the body, and regulates the ritualized and routine acts through which we constitute and recognize ourselves as embodied subjects (Butler, *Bodies that Matter*, 9).

By describing the VS as an agent of pastoral power, I do not mean to suggest that it idealized a bucolic existence isolated from the industrial centers of Victorian England (though many vegetarians certainly did dream of returning England to a rustic economy of market gardens and fruit cultivation). Rather, I hope to evoke the word's religious meaning (spiritual guidance) as well as its agricultural and technical meaning, the processes of tending, fostering, and cultivating life.<sup>10</sup> By "pastoring" I mean most importantly the material process of feeding, the act of leading animals, human or nonhuman, to their proper food, orchestrating what they eat. Food, an essential requirement for life, is power; the fate of nations states rests upon the control of resources and provisions, while dietary differences represent and reinforce economic, racial, social, and gender differences (Counihan 9). But by "pastoral power," I hope to capture not only the social hierarchies reflected in food consumption, but also the techniques that controlled the conduct of others, influencing what they ate, and how they understood and cared for themselves.

The academic field of food studies investigates the social and political significance of eating, posing the question, in Derrida's words, "what is eating?" or "what does it mean to eat well?" (113). Kyla Wazana Tompkins and Timothy Morton have both staged critical interventions that seek to redirect scholarly attention away from a fetishistic focus on food itself and toward an investigation of eating as a material and symbolic practice. Tompkins, who makes a point of

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<sup>10</sup> Anand Pandian leads the way here: in his study of the grazing practices in the south Indian state of Tamil Nadu, he takes "the pasturage in the theory of 'pastoral power' seriously" (104) to examine how the colonial legacy of governing humans as animals persists in the region's contemporary agrarian politics.

referring to her work as “critical eating studies” rather than food studies (2), examines the mouth in nineteenth-century American literature as a key boundary in the production of race, gender, and class. To her list of dietary identities, I would add the species distinction, which is missing from her discussion of the antebellum United States. While the performative aspect of eating will remain important to my analysis of vegetarianism, the serial media of the VS orient our attention toward prescriptive discourses on food—that is, not only to eating, but to what I am calling “feeding” or “pastoring,” the transmission of tastes and techniques for the care of the body. The verb, *to feed*, carries with it the implication of a power dynamic. One feeds those under one’s control and care—the young, the infirm, the patient, the imprisoned, and, indeed, the animals—but subjects also learn to feed themselves. Feeding, one of the Maussian “techniques of the body” (Mauss 70), develops and takes hold through reiteration, that is, through self-repeating patterns of behavior that produce cultural effects and symbolic distinctions (between pure and impure, human and animal, self and other).

The pastoral agencies that we now confront daily—medical authorities, nutritional experts and dietitians, recommended intakes and dietary guidelines, commercial interests and advertisements, food fashions and trends, cookbooks and celebrity chefs—do not directly put food into our mouths, but mediate our attitudes and actions in relation to food, health, and identity. In 1847, the year of the VS’s establishment, these modern forms of “pastoral power” were only starting to emerge. The proliferation of printed advice on what to eat, and the related industrialization of food production, offer a significant field to examine what Goodlad describes as England’s liberal governmentality. If, as Goodlad argues, the English state remained relatively small and non-interventionist in the nineteenth century, nowhere was this liberalism more apparent than in the free trade in food, which resisted any incursions by the government (Burnett 257-60). While today we entrust governing agencies with nutritional guidelines, food safety, and

consumer protection, the mid nineteenth century lacked a centralized authority on diet. The food question was contested by private individuals and reform groups in a variety of mediums, such as cookbooks, conduct manuals, magazines, newspapers, and scientific journals. Industrialization and the unprecedented growth of the urban population made feeding the social body a political problem. It was a problem that, as commentators in the press pointed out, confronted the nation as a corporate body, but the solutions offered by penny cookbooks, moral reformers, and domestic journals most often framed it as a matter of individual consumer choice, voluntary self-help, and domestic management, instilling what Mary Poovey calls “a *collective* sense of *individual* responsibility” (103). Part of my project therefore traces the emerging practice of managing how individuals thought about food, and the belief that such pastoral management had political and economic value.

The VS emerged within this contested field of biopolitical activity that sought to identify, satisfy, and capitalize on the wants of the human body. Building their platform on modern science, rational debate, and humane principles, vegetarian advocates regarded themselves as secular pastors whose role it was to guide the wayward flocks of industrial England toward their dietary salvation. For instance, the official objectives of the VS, which were decided upon at the first meeting and then reprinted on the front cover of each issue of the *Vegetarian Messenger*, were salvation-oriented. They emphasized a secular redemption through the cultivation of vegetarian habits:

The Objects of the Society are, to induce habits of Abstinence from the Flesh of Animals as Food by the dissemination of information upon the subject, by means of Tracts, Essays, and Lectures, proving the many advantages of a Physical, Intellectual, and Moral Character, resulting from Vegetarian Habits of Diet; and thus to secure, through Association, Example, and Efforts of its Members, the adoption of a Principle, which will tend essentially, to *True Civilization*, to *Universal Brotherhood*, and to *the increase of Human Happiness*, generally. (*Vegetarian Messenger*, Sept 1849).

This framing of the VS's objectives was designed to fit its project of food reform within the mid-century liberal ethos of governing through education, knowledge, and moral improvement: the VS did not directly tell people what to eat, but instead aimed to "induce habits of abstinence" through "the dissemination of information." An investigation of how the VS aimed to induce habits, disseminate information, and guide society toward civilization, happiness, and universal fraternity, involves addressing the power dynamics of what Foucault terms the "conduct of conduct" (*Security* 193), the strategies for managing the conduct of others. Power, according to Foucault, does not directly control subjects; it conducts their conduct ("Subject" 790). It acts upon actions; it structures, but does not exhaustively determine, the field of possible actions, influencing what is speakable, thinkable, livable, and, I would suggest, edible. My suggestion is that the nineteenth-century vegetarian movement worked by conducting conduct; it incited agency rather than foreclosed it.

As I have said, the VS was a pastoral society, leading the human flock to alternative pastures, away from the burgeoning market in animal flesh and toward "the direct productions of the vegetable kingdom" (*VM*, Sept. 1849, 2), which, it claimed, represented the natural diet of humanity. The VS's objective was to conduct the conduct of others—that is, to enact the agency of readers, listeners, and members as liberal and literate subjects to shape their own conduct, habits, and bodies. The practice of vegetarianism, according to its proponents, conformed to moral, divine, and physiological law, to the dictates of reason and instinct, but there was no legal or legislative mechanism for enforcing this law of abstinence, or for telling people what to eat. The VS could not coerce; it had to conduct, and the vegetarian convert had to be a willing subject, a participant in his or her own subjection to vegetarian truth. As Henry Clubb concluded in a lecture, "I desire not to make men Vegetarians, but that their own convictions should make them so" (*VM*, Dec. 1849, 36). Clubb, one of the first vegetarian pastors, wanted to make self-

making vegetarians, “men” who by their own convictions would make themselves into vegetarians. Everyday conduct was the target and terrain of vegetarian advocacy.

### **Cookery and Conduct in the Nineteenth Century, or How to Eat Things with Words**

In the nineteenth century, industrialization brought about radical dietary upheaval. Historians of food and diet present the period as one of disruption and innovation, a period of “social transition when new dietary habits, which subsequently became the accepted pattern, were being formed” (Burnett 77). In her work on Victorian cookery, Andrea Broomfield narrates a moment of culinary transformation in the mid-century, charting “a shift away from ancient flavours and preindustrial customs toward an industrial mindset when it comes to food and cooking” (3).

Broomfield acknowledges that industrialism impacted different regions at different times, but she still isolates the 1850s, the first decade of the VS’s existence, as one of “the most tumultuous and important periods in English food history” (102), a period of “constant transition between two modes of cooking” (107), pre-industrial and industrial. By placing constraints on time and space, industrialization radically transformed the methods and rhythms of cooking and eating (107). The regimented working schedules and dense housing of cities limited the ability of women to raise, grow, preserve, and produce food in traditional ways, and they turned to the advice of cookbooks and domestic magazines in order to adapt to new technologies and fulfill their new roles as domestic managers (112). Cooking in the mid-Victorian period was characterized less by learning ageless traditions, and more by learning to adapt to “constant innovation” (3). According to Broomfield, those living in the 1850s encountered domestic and economic circumstances unknown to previous generations, but a new system of cooking had not yet established itself.

The VS exploited this gap. It was here, during this historical moment of discontinuity and disruption, that the VS attempted to make its intervention, presenting its vegetable diet as the rational solution for industrialized cities and economizing housewives. Appearing amid the widespread proliferation of printed works of recipes and cookery in the nineteenth century, the VS adopted the science of domestic management to popularize its novel and eccentric practice, a practice that had few antecedents in English cuisine.

If it was a period of dietary and culinary transition, it was also one of codification, which gave increased symbolic importance to the performance of dining among the middle and upper classes. Amid unprecedented population growth and shifting social structures, dining became a privileged site for identity formation, class demarcation, and the expression of aspirational belonging (Davidoff 47; Burnett 77). In *Family Fortunes*, Davidoff and Hall argue that middleclass families became “preoccupied with new patterns of consumption: what goods to buy, how much, how to display and care for them. Not only their houses and furnishings and gardens, but their bodies, personal habits, clothes and language had to be recast into new molds” (320). The adoption of new consumption patterns could signify conformity and inclusion, as Davidoff and Hall suggest, but the preoccupation with consumption also positioned eating as a critical site to express dissent and nonconformity. The importance of self-fashioning through consumption offers context for understanding how vegetarianism became an identity. One did not simply abstain from flesh; one declared oneself a vegetarian.

The symbolic and social importance of dining made it an integral feature of “the new formalized system of etiquette” (Davidoff 27) that governed society, but it also created a market for advice books that claimed to provide the rules for entry into high society (Rich 28). All culinary cultures operate through implicit, informal rules, but, Davidoff argues, English society in the nineteenth century became explicitly formalized: by the mid-century the rules of etiquette



were accepted by “all of the British middle and upper classes” (Davidoff 16, 58). Print was essential to circulating and casting the new patterns of consumption among the middle classes: conduct and cookery books were marketed to men and women who aspired to move in different circumstances from the ones in which they were born (Rich 24-25). Books of household management and cookery traded in fantasy and desire, offering readers a model of middleclass life (Davidoff 27; Rich 27).

The larger cultural transformations of which the cookbook was both “a symptom and cause” (Beetham 20-1) not only shaped the development of vegetarianism, but were seized upon by vegetarians who similarly used print to codify what it meant to be a vegetarian. The point I want to emphasize here, then, is that the VS emerged at a time when dining became a privilege activity of social differentiation, and, crucially, when it became perceived not only as normal but also as necessary to regulate the body, consumption, and social behavior according to formally prescribed rules, which were sold and disseminated in print. Scholarship on nineteenth-century food and cooking, and indeed the nineteenth-century press and nineteenth-century cookbooks themselves, reveal a nation learning how to feed itself in new ways according to new print genres. In these materials, we read of a nation being told that it desperately needed new lessons in cookery, that it needed to cook, eat, and live life by the book and by the rules. For its own very different purposes, the VS actively worked to cultivate the belief that England needed to learn how to feed itself anew. As Francis Newman, president of the VS in the 1870s, wrote in *Fraser’s Magazine*, “we are waking up to the conviction that our nation collectively needs new lessons in cookery” (*Fraser’s*, Feb. 1875, 116). During the culinary and dietary transition of the nineteenth century, vegetarians used the press to institute new regimes and patterns of eating, constructing the model of domestic vegetarianism. The cultivation of “Vegetarian Habits of Diet” required that its advocates conduct themselves and others through the medium of print.

## Reading and Eating

In this dissertation, I bring together the field of periodical studies and that of governmentality. Foucault's conceptualization of government as "a complex interplay" between conduct and counter-conduct, or "coercion-technologies and self-technologies" (*Politics* 155), offers a compelling model to describe the relationship between a periodical and its readers in general, and between vegetarian periodicals and their readers in particular. His understanding of government as an agonistic contest that takes place between power and freedom suggests that we can read periodicals themselves as technologies of government. My aim is not to interpret the periodical press an instrument of social control or of progressive liberation, two of the most common views of media history, according to James Curran (136, 146). Rather, I regard the periodical as a site to analyze the negotiation between the techniques of subjection and techniques of the self, particularly in the formation of vegetarian subjectivity.

Margaret Beetham has laid out much of the theoretical groundwork for my study of vegetarian subject formation in the press. Her theory of the periodical as an open and closed genre allows us to interpret the activity of reading periodicals as one of the nineteenth century's most significant technologies of the self. As Beetham argues, periodicals offered readers different ways of understanding and recognizing themselves within a mediating epistemological frame. Their heterogeneity provided readers with multiple genres and entry points through which to approach the text, allowing readers to construct their own experience of the material ("Open and Closed" 96-100). Furthermore, because the serial form engaged readers across time, periodicals could involve readers in the development of the title, inviting them to contribute directly to its production in the form of letters, essays, and, in the case of vegetarian journals, recipes (96-100). Periodicals are forms of "participatory media" (Griffen-Foley 534), media that recruit their audience in their own production. And yet, on the other hand, the periodical format balanced this

open hospitality to readers against “a deep regular structure” (Beetham 99): the periodical’s appearance at regular intervals over time reinforced the temporal discipline of industrial capitalism, while its “the price, content, tone, and form” (99) all worked to address and construct a consistent subject position within the text, situating the reader within the social order. Hence, much the way Foucault argues that subjects are both constituted and self-constituting beings, Beetham suggests that readers formed themselves both *with* and *against* the periodicals they consumed. As James Mussell argues, the periodical press “both interpreted the world on behalf of its readers and provided the material for them to do so themselves” (50). As I argue, this balance between prescriptive and participatory elements is crucial for understanding the production and dissemination of vegetarianism in the pages of the *Vegetarian Advocate* and *Vegetarian Messenger*. While these periodicals told readers how to live their lives, they also depended on contributions from readers. Admittedly, *all* periodicals depend upon contributions from readers, at the very least in the form of subscriptions, but vegetarian journals maintained a much more *vital* dependence on their readers: their conversion narratives, published and circulated in correspondence pages and annual reports, made up the content of the journal while also displaying the livability of a vegetarian diet. For this reason, the VS emphasized the participatory nature of the press.

Hence, the singular word, *the vegetarian*, proudly displayed in the mastheads of vegetarian journals represented what Brake and Codell call “a false unity” (1). Mid-Victorian periodical titles, particularly under a policy of anonymity, presented themselves as a singular authorial voice, despite the fact that they were composed by different authors and made up of many genres, articles, and contributions. Similarly, “the Vegetarian Principle” (*VM*, Sept. 1849, 2), rather than signify a unified system of beliefs and practices, was a dialogic, unfolding process. Vegetarianism developed and changed through dialogue between editors and readers, between the officers of the VS and the everyday practitioners of the diet.

Maria DiCenzo, Lucy Delap, and Leila Ryan have argued that the official organs of social movements (they focus on the pressure group periodicals of the suffragist movement) receive short shrift from contemporary scholars, who ignore the ways in which these print materials exceed their supposedly simplistic ideological roles (78-9). Historians, they argue, tend to regard the media of organizations as sources of evidence, but rarely attempt “to consider the implications of these sources – as sources – and what they represented at the time in terms of vehicles for competing groups and ideas” (78). One could make a similar argument about the scholarly treatment of vegetarian journals such as the *Vegetarian Messenger*. Julia Twigg, in her pioneering structuralist analysis of the vegetarian movement, cites the *Vegetarian Messenger* for information on vegetarianism’s ideology, but does not analyse the importance of the genre or its formal features to the movement. For DiCenzo, such “dismissive treatment” of social movement organs is “largely the result of assuming they fulfilled a solely propagandist function or that they represented little more than newsletters for league activities” (78). However, while DiCenzo rightly criticizes the dismissal of protest organs *as* propaganda, she does not question the dismissal of propaganda itself. The word “propaganda” today suggests the biased use of information, but, in the nineteenth century, the term seems to have had neutral connotations. The vegetarians, at least, were not shy about describing their own publications as “organized propaganda” (Salt 16). Henry Salt even spoke of the “dignity of propaganda” (100), arguing that vegetarians, like “teetotallers, socialists, and other propagandists” (101), had the same right to advocate their dietary philosophy through print. No matter how innovative and progressive are the ideas or reforms they advocate, all forms of propaganda aim toward repetition; their objective is to reproduce their ideas, principles, or practices in others. The objective of socialist propaganda is to make socialists, feminist propaganda to make feminists, and vegetarian propaganda to make vegetarians. If we understand the function of propaganda in this sense—to propagate—then we

can read the *Vegetarian Messenger* as both a form of propaganda and as something more than “a pressure group periodical” or ideological mouthpiece. Its objective was corporeal propagation: the development of new techniques and culinary traditions for building and sustaining the body. Its target was not parliament, but the kitchen—not politics, but biopolitics, the production and reproduction of life. Propagating vegetarianism required teaching people how to live. Hence, vegetarian propaganda stressed the novelty and innovation of the diet as well as its habituation. The *Vegetarian Messenger* became a space for cultivating the principal objective, and instrument, of its advocacy: living vegetarians who could testify to beneficial effects of the diet.

My project investigates, therefore, the close relationship between eating and reading that developed in Victorian print culture, and my specific focus is on the advocacy journals, propaganda, and other mixed media (banquets, lectures, cookery demonstrations) of the VS. As proper dining came to rely on print based forms of knowledge (Beetham, “Good Taste,” 397), cookbooks and encyclopedic works on home management promised to provide the hints, codes, and recipes for a successful middle-class life, allowing one to read and eat one’s way to a new social identity. Print capitalism and the burgeoning food industry thus worked together to create habitual and recurrent patterns of consumption: effective home management came to depend upon the guidance of domestic literature, but these texts (such as the Beeton’s *Book of Household Management* and *English Woman’s Domestic Magazine*) in turn advertised the time-saving properties of modern industrially processed foods. Hence, eating (safely, healthily, fashionably) became dependent on reading, but reading, particularly the advertising pages of the popular press, in turn created the desire for new products and technologies, intertwining the daily rhythms of food and print consumption.

The VS sought to intervene at this intersection of text and taste. As Mark Turner notes, since the nineteenth century, periodical media have played a significant role in establishing “the

rhythm of modernity” (185), and Andrea Broomfield makes a similar argument regarding the standardization of meal times (107). Regular eating habits (the precise timing of breakfast, for example) and the patterns of the publishing industry (monthly, weekly, daily) both reflected and reinforced increasingly regimented working schedules. The daily newspaper aimed at matching the hurried lives of busy commuters, while food consumption also had to accelerate to accommodate the time constraints of modern life. The various incarnations of the VS’s journals offer rich territory to examine how readers from across the nation used print and the rhythms of the press to create a community based on shared reading and eating habits. Vegetarianism was literate eating: the community of vegetarians held itself together not by inherited culinary traditions or immediacy of social relations, but by the circulation of texts.

This dissertation details how the periodical served as the pastor and guide for new and experienced vegetarians, providing physiological, dietary, and doctrinal advice to readers. Laurel Brake argues that serial publishing, always oriented toward the next number, aimed at providing “*lifelong* reading material” (31), making print consumption a part of daily life. I argue that just as the periodicity of the press engaged readers regularly across time, developing habitual patterns of consumption, the VS worked to integrate itself into the daily lives of its members, buttressing the personal practice of the diet with the serial periodicity of its journal. Vegetarian tactics and practices were shaped through their interaction with the “periodical time” (Turner) and “commodity culture” (Richards) of Victorian society; they worked within the temporal patterns of the increasingly literate society they sought to reform.

## **Structure**

This dissertation has two parts. Part one, “Forms and Materials,” addresses the print media and press tactics that the VS adopted to disseminate information. The first two chapters undertake case studies of the first vegetarian periodicals, the *Vegetarian Advocate* (1848-1851), and the

*Vegetarian Messenger* (1849-). The analysis of the *Advocate* centres on the relationship between the journal's content and form, establishing a connection between the journal's seriality and its representation of vegetarianism as a practice of the self. Looking at the way in which early issues of the *Advocate* represented vegetarianism, it argues that the journal's serialization reinforced the individual and collective practice. I then focus on the place of statistics and information in vegetarian publications, opening up the analysis to include the *Vegetarian Messenger*, the journal that succeeded the *Advocate* as the official organ of the movement. The deployment of facts and figures lent vegetarianism the cultural authority of science and natural law, legitimating it as, in Poovey's terms, a modern fact, but vegetarians also used numbers and statistics internally to organize themselves and give shape to their lives. They recorded the number of years each had remained abstinent from flesh and created numerical series of recipes, menus, and daily meal plans. The argument, here, then, is that the emerging discourse of information, and the market economy that produced it, shaped not only the concept and practice of vegetarianism, but also vegetarians. The third chapter of part one looks at a significant genre of vegetarian propaganda, the personal testimony, which, I argue, allowed readers and contributors to the journal to define themselves and the meaning of vegetarianism.

Part two I have labelled interventions. Following the decline of the VS at the beginning the 1860s, vegetarian advocates needed to find new ways to publicize their cause and attract recruits. In the three chapters of part two, I examine how members of the VS sought to reinvigorate their waning movement. The first addresses the outbreak of the Cattle Plague, which vegetarians exploited in order to lend new urgency to dietary reform and ally it to concerns over contagion and social purity. The following chapter looks at the reforms introduced by Francis William Newman, the younger brother of John Henry Newman. Serving as president of the VS, Newman, controversially restructured membership in the society along the model of serialization

in the press, while he also made use of the dialogism of the press to re-imagine vegetarian eating itself as a conversation among its practitioners. Finally, I turn to Beatrice Lindsay, the first female editor of the *Dietetic Reformer and Vegetarian Messenger*, who introduced strategies from new journalism to vegetarian publications. Like Newman, she too made use of the formal characteristics of the press, particularly its mixture of repetition and difference, to expand the vegetarian palate. Together these three chapters demonstrate how the VS used its serial print media not to enforce total abstinence from flesh, but to create new regimes of self-care and self-government, allowing readers to shape themselves into vegetarian subjects through their participation and engagement in the movement.



## Part 1. The Pen, the Press, and the Tongue.

There is one point which strikes me as important—the individual duties of the members of the VS (hear, hear); if we attend well to these, nothing can stay the progress of our movement. Having such powerful convictions, as to the beneficial effects of practically adopting our principles, it becomes a duty incumbent upon us to communicate with others in the best possible manner on this subject. [...] The pen, the press, and the tongue will all be brought into active operation; and we may anticipate the time when superior tastes, and finer feelings will be brought into activity.

—Henry Stephens Clubb, Speaking at the First Annual Meeting of the VS.

At the First Annual Meeting of the VS on 28 July 1848, Henry Stephens Clubb (1827-1922) drew from his experience as one of the VS's first itinerant lecturers and local secretaries to offer his fellow vegetarians advice on how to convey their message to outsiders, and make converts to “the Vegetarian system” (“Report” 20). According to Clubb, members of the VS had “individual duties” (20) to communicate “the beneficial effects of practically adopting our principles” (20). Rather optimistically, he believed that “if we attend well to these [duties], nothing can stay the progress of our movement” (20). In the conclusion of his address, Clubb identified three different, yet interrelated, media through which he imagined vegetarianism would irresistibly progress and communicate itself in the nineteenth century: “the pen, the press, and the tongue, will all be brought into active operation” (20).

Clubb delivered this speech on “individual duties” (20) in July 1848. The first issue of the *Vegetarian Advocate* did not appear until September of that year; hence, Clubb's speech reflects the early culture of vegetarian advocacy before it had an official organ to spread its principles and organize its members. Although it anticipated using the press, Clubb's address focused on the role of the tongue in social and private situations. However, it is not my intention to argue that, over the course of the nineteenth century, print displaced orality in the vegetarian movement.

Vegetarianism was unavoidably an oral practice, built around the sociality of eating and speaking.

For this reason, it was all the more ephemeral. Food satisfies the needs of the present; it is eaten or it perishes. Culinary traditions, if they are not reproduced in daily life and handed down across generations, tend to disappear, as the vegetarians feared would happen to the traditional staples of Lancashire, such as oatcakes. What I want to examine in the first part of this dissertation is the way in which the periodical became a pastoral mechanism for the formation of a collective identity, a mechanism that united the action of the pen, press, and the tongue in the creation of vegetarianism and vegetarian subjects.

The first two chapters of this section address the VS's periodicals, the *Vegetarian Advocate* and *Vegetarian Messenger*, and their form, the serial; in the third I look at one of the most important genres in these journals, the personal testimony or conversion narrative, which filled their correspondence pages. The experience of early flesh abstainers, such as Joseph Brotherton, was communal; it was formed in, and supported by, the Bible Christian Church, a community in which all members abstained from intoxicating liquor and animal flesh together. However, in founding a national movement, vegetarians addressed themselves to a larger segment of society, to individuals who stood outside the protective boundaries of the church. New recruits, convinced in principle, faced immense difficulties in practicing vegetarianism in their homes and social circles (*VM: Vol 7*, 1856, 27). Isolated from other vegetarians, they could easily succumb to social pressures. For this reason, the periodicals of the VS not only performed the “three major functions” (282) that Brian Harrison attributes to pressure-group periodicals—to inspire, inform, and integrate (282)—but also served to insulate new vegetarians from temptations and guide them in their daily lives. The VS formed a community based not on the shared space of the church, but on the shared periodicity of the journal's publication. The seriality of the press linked readers through the mutual experience of reading and made possible the formation of common tastes, encouraging distant individuals to see themselves as part of a new community.

Despite the vegetarians' critique of what they saw as the irrational force of custom, their novel diet also needed to become a repetitive routine and a social discipline. It needed to contend with what Appadurai calls "the social inertia of bodily techniques" (67), that is, the repetitive rhythms of the body. As Appadurai argues, patterns of consumption and Maussian techniques of the body take hold not simply through imitation, but through habituation; even resistant forms of consumption need to establish themselves through the dull, unremarkable force of repetition: "the body calls for disciplines that are repetitious [...] practices of consumption that are closest to the body acquire uniformity through habituation" (67). Among body techniques, Appadurai argues that "eating—unlike, say, tattooing—calls for habituation" (67). Enduring consumption practices entail repetition rooted in social inertia. I suggest that the periodicities of serial publication, its monthly issues and yearly volumes, provided a larger structure of seasonality and temporality around which vegetarians could anchor the smaller, repetitive cycles of daily practice. The vegetarian periodicals' monthly calendar of banquets, tea meetings, lectures, and soirees forged a community to support the practice of the diet, and created a rhythm to vegetarian living. The argument here, then, is that the "progress and pause" (Turner 193) of the periodical shaped and guided the production and incorporation of the vegetarian social identity. Vegetarian periodicals kept the new recruit informed, but they also articulated an alternative vision of pleasure, fulfilment, and community, providing practical knowledge on how to feed the body. Vegetarianism, as a social movement, became possible with the expansion of the press, when a new community of eaters could bind together as community of readers. It required not only abstaining from flesh foods, but also developing cultural practices and an environment in which one could live as a vegetarian.

Clubb's list of metonyms, "the pen, the press, and the tongue" ("Report" 20) with which I opened this section, identifies the principal means (the penny post, the periodicals press, and the

culture of lectures, debates, conversations, and dinners) through which individuals participated in the nineteenth-century economy of information—and, indeed, through which the VS engaged its members. All three media have attracted scholarly attention. In an early approach to the study of press, Scott Bennett described Victorian England as a “journalizing society,” a society that diurnally imagined, composed, and documented itself in serial print media (21). Following Bennett, scholars have established the centrality of the periodical press in shaping nineteenth-century life. David McKitterick, meanwhile, has drawn attention to the fact that, alongside the expansion of the press, the penny post created “a scribal culture” in which even “the very poor” wrote letters to exchange social, personal, and practical knowledge “on a scale never previously witnessed in history” (533). Introduced in 1840 after the reforms of Rowland Hill, the penny post promised to democratize communication and strengthen the unity of the national body (Headrick 192). Its transparency, inclusivity, and regularity provided a concrete image of social interconnection, encouraging individuals to imagine themselves as part of a national discourse network (Menke 67).

However, while “the written word dominated mass communication” (Bennett 21), one should not, as Secord reminds us and as the VS’s annual meetings demonstrate, overemphasize print at the expense of “oral performance,” which “has been and remains at the heart of making knowledge” (Secord, “Shop Talk,” 23). Secord’s work on early nineteenth-century science demonstrates that, before peer-review publishing became the norm, knowledge was communicated through polite conversation in salons, clubs, and lectures (26-7). Samuel Alberti similarly has noted the role of “conversaciones” in bringing modern science into contact with the Victorian middleclass culture of display, performance, and entertainment (208). John van Wyhe, mapping the spread of phrenology in the nineteenth century, has argued that while print diffused “awareness of the fact that there was something called phrenology” (70), the active “adoption and

practice of it” (70) relied on direct contact, an argument that might also apply to vegetarianism: one could not only read about it; one also had to talk about it socially. Thus, as Gitelman argues, “[t]he nineteenth century was far more rooted in aural experience than is easy to recover today” (26); however, she adds that this aural experience was also “tenaciously multiple and inseparable from visual experience [...] lectures, oratory, recitations, concerts, sermons, and revival meetings all enforced the connection of aural and visual sense” (26).

The VS was at once a journalizing society, a scribal culture, and a dinner club. To adapt Gitelman, its meetings, banquets, *conversazioni*, and publications created an experience that was “tenaciously multiple,” engaging all five of the senses through music, food, lectures, debates, and print. The society integrated the pen, press, and tongue to create a dynamic interrelationship among texts, discourses, practices, bodies, social life, and popular culture. It published a monthly journal, keeping a record of its events and meetings, but readers also “journalized” themselves, documenting what they ate and the effects it had on their bodies. The penny post made possible the domestic delivery of vegetarian periodicals while postal communication also allowed readers to share experience with the vegetarian practice. It located readers’ everyday activities within a larger community and context of social progress. With the expansion of newspapers, readers were further encouraged to write letters to their local papers, and generate discussions food choices in the press. The VS wanted active reader-writers, consumers and producers of vegetarianism. Frequent and rapid communication between geographically isolated individuals allowed the VS to create a sense of community among readers, writers, and eaters, who, although separated spatially, were unified through the periodicity of the press, consuming the same text at the same time.

The practical knowledge and pleasurable sensations imparted and received by “the tongue” in the kitchen, in conversation, and at the dinner table served the dual function of presenting the diet to the uninitiated and in reproducing the practice in the social life. Soirees and

tea meetings introduced the subject of vegetarianism “in a social form, and to classes of hearers but rarely found in the lecture room” (*VM: Vol. 4*, 1853, 5). Social meetings were opportunities for conversation and consumption. Depending on the size of the meeting, such social advocacy had the purpose of performing for the public, or to one’s own circle of friends, the refined tastes of vegetarianism as well the abundant resources available to the vegetarian consumer. The routine of yearly, monthly, and weekly events cultivated vegetarian sociality, bringing vitality and unity to the movement. The VS recognized that anyone who deviated from the dietary customs of their home and society would become eccentric and isolated: “We are obliged to admit that the greatest impediments to the progress of the Vegetarian System are to be found in the social circle” (*VM: Vol 4*, 1853, 17). Thus, employing the pen, press, and tongue, they had to create an alternative social circle and culture. Members of the VS read and distributed tracts, pamphlets, and periodical literature; they wrote letters to the editor and to each other; they tried and traded recipes; they attended banquets, lectures, and “Vegetarian Pleasure Parties” (*VA*, Sept. 1849, 3); they observed educational displays, lantern shows, and musical performances. Engaging all five senses and multiple forms of media, the VS adopted and adapted the popular and intellectual culture of its time to represent vegetarianism to the public, and to cultivate its own inner circle.

## **1. A Fact In the History of the World: The *Vegetarian Advocate*, 1848-1851.**

The *Vegetarian Advocate* appeared in September 1848, and it began with a banquet:

Whether we regard this banquet as indicative of the progress of the vegetarian movement; as an exhibition of the refined taste and happy feeling; the deep and elevated thought, mingled with unfeigned cheerfulness, and a flow of the purest spirits of humanity (which it is the main object of the movement to promote through individual purification); or whether we regard it in its wider sense, as a fact in the history of the world, marking progress from semi-barbarism to enlightened, orderly, and merciful civilization; we could not enter the Assembly-room of Hayward's Hotel, Manchester, on Friday, the 28<sup>th</sup> of July, 1848, without being forcibly struck with the beautiful and orderly arrangement which was there presented. ("Report" 1)

The vegetarians were eating their way to civilization. The occasion for this exhibition of refined taste was the one-year the anniversary of the VS, founded the previous September of 1847. The society faithfully documented the event in its "Report of the First Annual Meeting of the VS," which was published separately as a pamphlet but also occupied the first twenty-two pages of the *Vegetarian Advocate*, volume one (figure 1.1). Annual reports were a convention of nineteenth-century voluntary associations, and the vegetarians' "Report" on their First Annual Meeting details the formal proceedings one would expect from such an assembly—the appointment of a chairman, the election of the society's officers and president, a toast to the monarch (with pure cold water!), the delivery of speeches and resolutions, and an account of the society's activities, membership, and transactions over the past year. But their "Report," like the meeting itself, placed an unconventional amount of emphasis on the menu, providing an aestheticized description of the food, an arrangement of the dishes and vases on the tables, and the order in which courses were served. The First Course consisted of a large savoury omelette, beetroot and other vegetables, macaroni and mushroom pies, and various flavours of fritters (rice fritters, sage and onion fritters, bread and parsley fritters, and forcemeat fritters). The Second Course brought dessert: plum pudding, moulded rice, almonds and raisins, cheesecakes, figs, custards, grapes,

flummery, gooseberries, creams, nuts, red and white currants, and fruit tarts. Adopting the language of domestic ideology, the report positioned food, its arrangement and presentation, as a metonym for the value of those who prepared and consumed it, the ladies and gentlemen of the VS.<sup>11</sup> The “beautiful and orderly arrangement” of the vegetarians’ banquet tables was both a signifier of, and the means toward, an “enlightened, orderly, and merciful civilization” (1).

As a public demonstration of vegetarianism, the First Annual Banquet addressed two audiences, internal and external, simultaneously: the food on the tables created communion internally among vegetarians, reconstituting the lost sense of community they experienced when they renounced the flesh, but the Banquet also communicated the practice to outsiders. It was designed for a demonstrative purpose, “viz. to show to the world that an abundant, and even luxuriant, feast can be provided, without offending the moral feelings by acts of cruelty and bloodshed” (“Report” 14). This historic introduction of vegetarianism presented the new diet and identity to the world, articulating its emergent appetites and values. The Banquet’s publication, in the *Vegetarian Advocate* and separately as a tract, encouraged readers to consume the occasion in absentia through the medium of print. Dissemination in the press extended “the flow of human kindness” (“Report” 1) to geographically distant readers, who could read even of the dishes and their arrangement on the table (figure 1.2).

This “bloodless feast” (3), a feast “decorated with Nature’s choicest productions of flowers, fruits, and vegetables, intermingled with dishes of artistic cookery” (1), was a material performance: to borrow a phrase from Patrick Joyce, it made “matter perform” (10). The Report on the Banquet emphasized the culinary techniques of cutting and moulding the productions of nature into culture, vegetables into civilization: the “dishes of artistic cookery” were “ornamented with garnishes of pastry, beet-root, turnip, carrot, parsley, and cauliflower, cut into such shapes,

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<sup>11</sup> On metonymy in domestic ideology, see Kay Boardman.



and formed into such combinations with regard to color, as to surprise us that these simple vegetables could be formed into such a pleasing variety of decorations, for objects otherwise ‘pleasant to the sight and good for food’” (1). Vegetarian food signified civilization and order; its preparation and consumption were symbolic acts that demarcated the vegetarian community and its values. The vegetarians themselves, “glowing with health, vigour, and vivacity” (1), were key actors in this performance: their radiant presence demonstrated that “animal food is not necessary for the sustenance of human life” (3). The vegetarians were not simply recording “a fact in history of the world,” but were making everyday life seem historic, producing a history of themselves, of their daily fare, and of their abstinent bodies, which they held up as undeniable facts in favour of their principles.

The opening passage of the Report regards the Banquet of the one-year old society as “a fact in the history of the world” (1), and the periodicals of the VS were oriented toward a utopian future, “the progress of the vegetarian movement” (1), but they also had to engage with the very things that are left on the margins of history: everyday domestic routines. The VS was intent on creating a social movement, but it also had to create vegetarians and everyday vegetarian life: the “vegetarian movement” was part of the linear duration of history, “marking progress from semi-barbarism to enlightened, orderly, and merciful civilization” (“Report” 1), but the practice of vegetarianism took place within the cyclical, repetitive, time of daily life. The *Vegetarian Advocate* brought these different levels of periodicity together—each issue contained personal narratives and recipes from readers, while the framework of the periodical embedded these individual stories within a larger collective narrative. The VS used the orderly, regular intervals of the periodical press, the medium through which the banquet’s exhibition of vegetarian eating was circulated and presented to the public, in order to inform orderly, regular habits of vegetarian consumption.

# REPORT

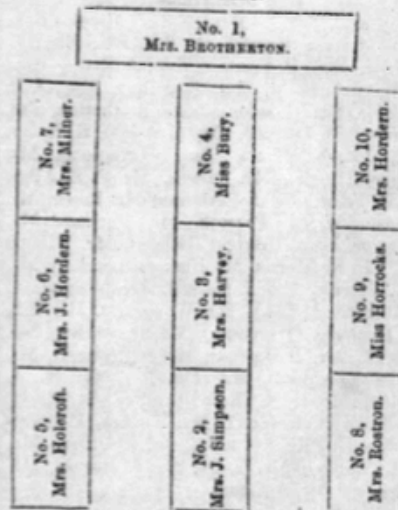
OF  
THE FIRST ANNUAL MEETING  
OF  
THE VEGETARIAN SOCIETY.

## THE BANQUET.

WHETHER we regard this banquet as indicative of the progress of the vegetarian movement; as an exhibition of the refined taste and happy feeling; the deep and elevated thought, mingled with unfeigned cheerfulness, and a flow of the purest spirits of humanity (which it is the main object of the movement to promote through individual purification); or whether we regard it in its wider sense, as a fact in the history of the world, marking progress from semi-barbarism to enlightened, orderly, and merciful civilization; we could not enter the Assembly-room of Hayward's Hotel, Manchester, on Friday, the 28th of July, 1848, without being forcibly struck with the beautiful and orderly arrangement which was there presented. The tables were decorated with Nature's choicest productions of flowers, fruits, and vegetables, intermingled with dishes of artistic cookery; and these ornamented with garnishes of pastry, beet-root, turnip, carrot, parsley, and cauliflower, cut into such shapes, and formed into such combinations with regard to color, as to surprise us that these simple vegetables could be formed into such a pleasing variety of decorations, for objects otherwise 'pleasant to the sight and good for food;' and when we turned from these evident signs of refined taste, to view the 'human face divine,' as displayed in a happy distribution of age and sex around the festive board, glowing with health, vigor, and vivacity, and illuminated with such smiles of pure friendship and regard for each other as could only flow from hearts as pure, we could plainly see that all experienced a delightful stream of thought and happy joyous feeling. Friends met friends from distant parts (for the counties of Lancashire, Warwickshire, Worcestershire, Yorkshire, to as far as Middlesex, Suffolk, Essex, and Kent, together with Ireland, and Scotland, did their parts to contribute thinking, earnest, but cheerful men and women); and those who had long corresponded—long felt the flow of

human kindness between each other, without any personal knowledge—here met face to face; and what the pen had failed to express, and the tongue could not give utterance to, was plainly indicated by the countenance, or glistened through the eye. The tables were arranged in three lines the length of the room, joining one on a platform which crossed the top; there being also an extra table in the recess behind the platform. The tables were divided into ten compartments, each provided for by one of the following ladies:—Mrs. Brotherton, Mrs. James Simpson, Mrs. Harvey, Miss Bury, Mrs. Holcroft, Mrs. Joseph Hordern, Mrs. Milner, Mrs. Rostron, Miss Horrocks, and Mrs. Hordern, as shown by the annexed plan.

### PLAN OF THE TABLES.



JOSEPH BROTHERTON, Esq., M.P. (who has abstained from flesh diet for 39 years), occupied the middle seat on the platform, and was supported, on his right, by Mrs. Brotherton (who has

Figure 1.1: First Annual Report of the VS, 1848. *Vegetarian Society Archives*.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>FIRST COURSE.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>LARGE SAVOURY OMELET.</b> <i>Vegetables.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>RICE FRITTERS.</b> <i>Vegetables.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>BEET-ROOT.</b></p> <hr style="width: 10%; margin: 5px auto;"/> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>SMALL VASE OF FLOWERS.</b></p> <hr style="width: 10%; margin: 5px auto;"/> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>ONION AND SAGE FRITTERS.</b> <i>Vegetables.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>SAVOURY PIE.</b></p> <hr style="width: 10%; margin: 5px auto;"/> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>LARGE VASE OF FLOWERS.</b></p> <hr style="width: 10%; margin: 5px auto;"/> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>MUSHROOM PIE.</b> <i>Vegetables.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>BREAD AND PARSLEY FRITTERS.</b></p> <hr style="width: 10%; margin: 5px auto;"/> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>SMALL VASE OF FLOWERS.</b></p> <hr style="width: 10%; margin: 5px auto;"/> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>BEET-ROOT.</b> <i>Vegetables.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>FORCEMEAT FRITTERS.</b> <i>Vegetables.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>LARGE MACARONI OMELET.</b></p> <hr style="width: 10%; margin: 5px auto;"/> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>WATER THE ONLY BEVERAGE.</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>SECOND COURSE.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>PLUM PUDDING</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>MOULDED RICE.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>ALMONDS AND RAISINS.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>CHEESECAKES.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>FIGS.</b></p> <hr style="width: 10%; margin: 5px auto;"/> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>SMALL VASE OF FLOWERS.</b></p> <hr style="width: 10%; margin: 5px auto;"/> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>CUSTARDS.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>GRAPES.</b></p>
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Figure 1.2: Plan of the Tables, First and Second Courses. *Vegetarian Society Archives.*

I want to suggest that serialization and seriality allowed the VS to represent vegetarianism *as serial*—that is, as a progressive, sequential system that (supposedly) followed natural order but also exemplified human reason’s capacity to grasp the laws of nature. Serial modes of publication and commodity production in the nineteenth century created what Secord, Hopwood, and Schaffer term a “serial culture” in which the very structure of the world itself seemed serial (251). These historians of science argue that seriality offers a useful category for historical analysis because it focuses attention on *practice*, “uniting approaches that have variously been dealt with as material (such as publications and exhibitions) and conceptual (such as developmental and evolutionary sequences)” (278). Serialization, I argue, was integral to both the practice and concept of vegetarianism: its print materials (periodicals, tracts, cookbooks) were published serially and made use of numerical series (in the organization of publications, in the numbering of ingredients and recipes, and in the recording of statistical information, for instance,) while the

practice itself was conceptualized as a progressive step in the development of the individual and the species. That is, series and serials were the means by which vegetarianism was communicated, but they (serial print media) also represented the practice of vegetarianism as a serial progression, or, indeed, “as a fact in the history of the world, marking progress from semi-barbarism to enlightened, orderly, and merciful civilization” (“Report” 1). Vegetarian periodicals and cookbooks exploited their audience’s familiarity with the conventions of serial publication and other forms of serial media (such as museum exhibitions) in order to make vegetarianism legible within the progressive narratives and “serial culture” of the nineteenth century (Hopwood, Schaffer, and Secord 252-85).

### **The Genre of the Periodical**

Scott Bennett argues that nineteenth-century Britain “adopted periodicals as the chief means of carrying forward the discourse by which a society comes to know itself” (21). The concept of motion, of carrying forward, was key to the literal and figurative role of periodicals: they quite literally “moved through society, from press to bookseller to reader, and, probably, to other readers” (Mussell 68), and the steady motion of the press “also moved ideas, images, and representations” (68), narrating and shaping the progress of society. As both the recorders and agents of social movement, periodicals circulated ideas, but they also circulated the very idea of movement.

For instance, John Sommerville argues that the advent of periodical news oriented readers “toward change, toward the future, and toward possibilities [...] Periodicity is about movement” (10). For Sommerville, daily newspapers sell the news and they sell the belief that “*change* is the really important feature of life” (10). This future orientation had commercial motives, fostering desire for the next issue, but, by circulating a cultural model of continuous movement, it also created the conditions in which something like the concept of a social movement became

possible. Indeed, social movement theorists have linked the development of social movement repertoires to print media. Sydney Tarrow argues that the experience of reading the same material created the “weak ties” that were the basis of “strong movements” (52). Subscription to a journal linked readers to a network of unknown others, and thus the press established a common foundation for collective action (Tarrow 49-52).

However, as other scholars have argued, periodicals are characterized as much by continuity as by progressive change: a periodical has to sell the news, but it also has to sell itself by establishing its title, character, and identity in the lives of readers. Margaret Beetham’s classic statement on the genre of the periodical offers some balance to Sommerville’s emphasis on the change and instability, addressing both the “date-stamped” (Beetham 21) ephemerality of individual issues and the enduring qualities of the form. She argues that all serials display a paradoxical combination stability and change, repetition and novelty. These formal properties define the periodical as a genre and are shaped by the financial imperative to ensure that readers return for each issue. As Beetham argues, “[e]very number is different, but it is still the ‘same’ periodical. This consistency is necessary so that the reader keeps coming back” (98). The periodical offers readers new content within a recurrent form; its repeated form allows it to develop “a recognizable persona” (Beetham 99) and establish a relationship with readers across time. As James Mussell argues, “form gave periodicals their identity” (68) while also providing readers with the framework through which to understand experience (68). The persona of the periodical created for readers a sense of stability in direct contrast to the fluctuating modern world reflected in its pages. Thus, when analysing print media, we need to attend to the ways in which periodicals were not only rushing into the future, but were also, with each passing issue, patiently constructing continuity with the past and a sense of permanence; they created a collective sense of identity and tradition among regular readers through the key device of repetition. The

repetitiveness of the genre embedded it into everyday life, and, for vegetarian advocates, made it a significant medium for the gradual inculcation of new readers.

Vegetarian print media, as I will demonstrate, served to construct a history and a tradition in the present. Each new issue looked toward the future and built on what came before it; they held up the promise of a better future, which Beetham terms “the dream of a different future, or the fantasy of alternatives” (99). But, while building a shared belief among readers in the “Progress of the Movement” (Oct 1848, 35), vegetarian periodicals also involved moments of suspension (such as the First Annual Banquet) that oriented readers to a broader narrative of history, connecting the past, present, and future of the vegetarian movement. In his meditation on time in periodicals, Mark Turner argues that all periodicals have built into their publishing cycles a pause or period of waiting between issues (194). These lapses are where communication and reading occur; as Turner argues, “that period of waiting and reading is the link between the past and the future” (194). For the vegetarian readership, the monthly pause between issues was the time of experimenting, of preparing and consuming food, of trying out recipes, of meeting socially with other vegetarians. It was the time when readers experimented with vegetarianism and turned themselves into vegetarians.

If, as Beetham argues, the periodical as a genre is characterized by difference and repetition, newness and sameness, one can say something similar about dinner: it offers new content (at least for those in a position to eat daily), but follows the same cultural form each day. Because of this homology, I suggest that the periodical’s mixture of new and old suited the aims of the VS: vegetarian food reform too was characterized by difference and repetition. The VS had to be simultaneously progressive and conservative; it had to break with established customs while also constructing new habits. On the one hand, it emphasized the modernity and innovation of its diet, but, on the other, it cultivated the habitual practice of vegetarian life, mirroring the serial

repetition of its journal. The vegetarian movement operated through difference and repetition, putting new content into the established rituals of the table; as such, its objective, a reformation in attitudes toward food and animals, found a close analogue in its medium, the serial periodical.

Beetham concludes her essay on the stability and fluidity of the periodical genre with a suggestion for future research:

the appearance of the periodicals at regular intervals of time both affirms the reader's place in a time regulated society and promises that this is not the end, there will be another number. I suggest that it is here that we should look not only to continue our discussions about the nature of the periodical as a form but also to understand its continuing vitality. (99)

Following Beetham, I too suggest that it is here, at the periodical's "particular balance of closure against openness" (99), that we identify the form's importance for the vegetarian movement.

Indeed, the form's vitality for the VS lay in the way it shaped vegetarian lives, a claim I will make here by looking at a brief example: not at the periodical itself, but an advertisement for the first series of Vegetarian Tracts that appeared in the *Vegetarian Advocate* (figure 1.3). As noted, the Report on the First Annual Banquet, with which I opened this chapter, prefaced the first volume of the *Vegetarian Advocate*, but it was also issued as part of a series of Vegetarian Tracts. Tract no. 1 consisted of a description of the VS, its rules for membership and declaration of abstinence; no. 2 contained the Report on the Banquet; nos. 3 and 4 reproduced the speeches of Brotherton and Simpson at the Banquet. Notably, the advertisement informed readers that these tracts were "to be followed by others" (figure 1.3). We see, then, the constitutive incompleteness and openness of serialization, whether in tract or periodical: the last number, or most recently published tract, would not in fact be the last (Mussell, "Our Last," 345). The numerical series (no. 1, 2, 3, 4...) created a model of continuous, limitless growth for the VS—there would always be the next number to read, consume, and distribute—but this open-ended serialization also contributed to what I term the vegetarians' serialization of life, their tendency to see themselves and their actions

not in isolation, but, metonymically, as part of a larger whole or sequence.<sup>12</sup> Each individual tract was part of the larger series, just as each vegetarian was part of the larger movement.

Individual issues of the *Vegetarian Advocate* often drew attention to their serial form, making deliberate gestures to locate themselves within the larger series of which they were a part. For instance, take the way in which the editors of the *Vegetarian Advocate*, in a report on the progress of the movement, drew readers' attention to the advertisements for the publication of their new Tracts:

Since our last, it will be seen from our advertising columns, that a series of 'Vegetarian Tracts' has been commenced. No. 1 is now ready, and consists of a Brief Abstract of the Report of the Vegetarian Banquet; the succeeding numbers are to embrace the speech of J. Brotherton, Esq. MP, John Smith Esq., James Simpson Esq., ect.; each forming a separate tract, suitable for extensive distribution. They are sold in large quantities at prime cost, and in sixpenny packets of about 100 pages, to promote gratuitous circulation, and will we trust, be productive of much good (*VA*, Oct 1848, 36).

As James Mussell notes, phrases such as “in our last” imply seriality, creating continuity across issues (345). However, “our last” is, by definition, not the last or final issue; it is the latest. The phrase, *in our last*, “gestures to what is disallowed in serial publication: the last, the final issue, when publication comes to an end” (Mussell 345). As Mussell elsewhere argues, newspapers and periodicals are “predicated upon not finishing, where the latest issue is not the last” (*Digital Age* 31). This model of limitless growth, on which the latest tract or issue was to be followed by others, created a handy analogy for the future progress of the vegetarian movement itself, but it also provided a model by which individual vegetarians lived their lives. The Annual Report, which was here advertised as a serialized tract, made sure to list, alongside the names of the members in attendance at the Banquet, the number of years each had abstained from flesh, creating an association between the numerical serialization of the text and the serial accumulation of abstinence: we learn, for instance, that Joseph Brotherton and Mrs. Brotherton had both

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<sup>12</sup> On the metonymic reading practices produced by series and serialization, see Teresa Goddu.



abstained for 39 years; John Smith, for 13 years; Thomas Taylor for 35 year; Mrs. Simpson for 39; Miss Hernton for 38 years; Mr. Gaskill for 34 years; and so on. Just as the VS enumerated its publications in an open, unending series, it also tallied up the lives of individual vegetarians, counting their continuous, on-going years of abstinence. Through numerical representation, the VS thus created a close connection among individual vegetarians, vegetarian texts, and the progress of the vegetarian movement itself, in a way that, to paraphrase Beetham, affirmed individual members' position in the structure of the society and held out the promise of an open future. Vegetarians could look forward to future issues of the journal, future years of abstinence, and future moral and social progress, while also seeing themselves as an integral part of a regulated society. I would now like to show how this serialization of life appeared in early representations of vegetarianism.

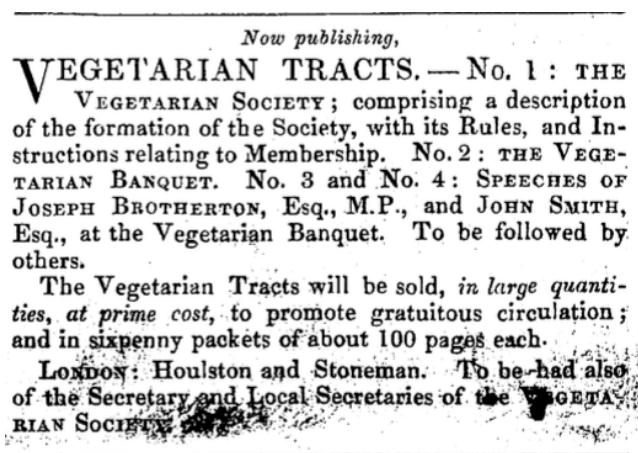


Figure 1.3: Advertisement for Vegetarian Tracts. *Vegetarian Advocate*, Oct. 1848. Google Books.

### “To Our Readers”: The Prospectus to the First Issue of the *Vegetarian Advocate*

In September 1848, the *Truth-Tester*, a temperance and hydropathic journal published by William Horsell on the Isle of Man, “adopted a new title,” the *Vegetarian Advocate*, becoming the official organ of the VS and the first periodical to bear the name, *Vegetarian*, on its masthead (Sept. 1848, 21). Advertisements for VEGETARIAN PUBLICATIONS indicate that the magazine was published

on the first of each month and cost two pence directly from the publishers, three pence stamped, or two shillings and six pence for a yearly subscription. Its first issue began with a prospectus of the journal, in which the editors explained its monthly features and their “plans for the future, so that our readers may understand the character of this publication” (21). The adoption of “a new title” signalled a break with the past, but the prospectus, by describing the publication’s character, tone, and layout immediately began the work of developing a new tradition. Outlining “the character of this publication” (21) was also part of the process of outlining the character and collective identity of vegetarians. It was not only the content of the periodical, but its “character,” its typographic appearance and repeated structure, that would mediate and define vegetarianism for readers.

In this prefatory address, “To Our Readers,” the editors announced and explained their decision to adopt the new title, transforming the *Truth-Tester* into the *Vegetarian Advocate*. They heralded their creation of the *Vegetarian Advocate* as a defining moment in progress of the movement. I focus here on this prospectus, “To Our Readers,” because it provides us with the plan and structure of the new *Vegetarian Advocate*, and it indicates how a combination of novelty and repetition, or “miscellaneity and seriality” (Mussell 68), went into constituting both the vegetarian periodical and its vegetarian readers. As I am suggesting, the serial form of the journal was instrumental in constructing and sedimenting the collective identity of vegetarians. Niche journals, such as the *Truth-Tester* and *Vegetarian Advocate*, had to cultivate a relationship with their readership, creating a close identity between readers and the journal; the prospectus for the *Vegetarian Advocate* reveals that introducing vegetarianism to readers involved some trepidation. When William Horsell operated under the original title of the *Truth-Tester*, he and his editors had occasionally featured articles on the vegetarian system, but they remained “cautious in introducing this subject to our readers, lest we should give offence to a great portion of them” (Sept. 1848,

22). As a specialist periodical, the *Truth-Tester* had to preserve its base readership, and the editors were wary of straying too far from their journal's recognized persona by including novel subjects, especially a subject as unorthodox and potentially alienating as vegetarianism. But slowly they became confident that, if "the subject were judiciously laid before them" (22), their temperance audience would "find, in the vegetarian movement, a new field of exercise" (22). The prospectus thus draws attention to the way in which the construction of a periodical is a reciprocal process between publishers and readers; the objectives of its editors must contend with the desires, expectations, and interests of the community it addresses; the development of this relationship takes place over time. The introduction of vegetarianism, and the transition from *Truth-Tester* to *Vegetarian Advocate*, took place incrementally rather than suddenly. Whereas the *Truth-Tester* had tentatively presented "now and then an article on the vegetarian question shrouded, as it may at first have been, under some more popular title" (21), the editors "gradually spoke out more boldly" (21), ultimately placing "vegetarian" in the journal's very title. Vegetarianism now dared to speak its name. In the first issue of the *Vegetarian Advocate*, the editors announced that, with the change in title, "we feel great confidence and no small degree of pleasure in exhibiting, on every page of our work, the significant words, 'The Vegetarian Advocate.' This we regard as no small indication of the progress of the movement" (21). The editors hoped the journal's adoption of a new title, its decision to speak out more boldly and declare itself as a vegetarian periodical, would offer encouragement to "*secret disciples*" of the diet, those who privately abstained from flesh but had not yet "*come out and avowed themselves*" (Oct. 1848, 35) as vegetarians. The celebrated exhibition of "the significant words, the 'Vegetarian Advocate'" suggest that the editors were attempting to construct a model of public speech, declaration, and self-identification for their readers to follow. Constructing the identity of the journal was, in other words, a way of constructing the identity of its reader; that is, it was a way of influencing readers toward making a

public avowal and declaration of abstinence from flesh (which I take up in a chapter on confessional discourse below). The journal, thus, did not merely exhibit this significant word, *Vegetarian*; it also set about defining it and what it meant to be a vegetarian.

Among the more prominent features of the periodical outlined in its prospectus was the “Leading Article” (figure 1.4). As the editors explained, “these short essays will be suited to the perusal of those who are unacquainted with the general views of vegetarians” (Sept. 1848, 21). They took on the role of explaining vegetarian principles to the “unacquainted,” while they also furnished established vegetarian readers with arguments to defend themselves. The leading article in the first issue, titled “Moral Movements,” positioned the VS among contemporary “societies for the moral elevation of the people” (Sept. 1848, 22), and it represented vegetarianism as the latest development in a series of “great and important *principles*: the principle of the universal brotherhood of man; the sanitary principle; the principle of universal education; the teetotal principle; and we rejoice to add, what we believe will assist in the practical adoption of all others, the VEGETARIAN PRINCIPLE” (22). The leading articles of the subsequent issues—“Vegetarianism and Education,” “Vegetarianism and Temperance,” “Vegetarianism and Early Closing,” and “Vegetarianism and Sanitary Reform”—framed vegetarianism’s relevance in relation to these other movements, and created a “series of papers” (*VA*, Oct. 1848, 33) that carried on the debate over several issues. By situating itself within a range of social movements—abolitionism, pacifism, teetotalism, communitarianism, educational reform, and sanitary reform—the VS sought to constitute itself out of a pre-existing field of activity, forging what Calhoun describes as a broad network of overlapping memberships and commitments (Calhoun 271). The VS framed itself as the logical extension of these established movements, but also as the means toward their realization and unification. Because it envisioned (or so it claimed) a far more radical

and foundational restructuring of life, vegetarianism would support and “assist in the practical adoption of all others” (Sept. 1848, 22).

After the “leading essay” for the conversion of the unacquainted (figure 1.4), the remaining features of the *Vegetarian Advocate* were intended for the inner circle of vegetarians: “The Progress of the Movement” documented the VS’s proceedings; “Vegetarian Intelligence” reported on the private and public activities (lectures, meetings, conversations, and debates) undertaken by the society’s members in different towns throughout England and abroad; “Correspondence,” an important feature, supplied testimony from readers on their dietary experiments, and answered inquiries; “Notices” reviewed books on humanitarian issues and drew readers’ attention to salient passages; “Facts and Figures” armed readers with information to deploy in their conversations with flesh-eaters; “Miscellany” consisted of “condensed anecdotes, and a variety of information in ‘small parcels’ to relieve the necessary gravity of a great portion of our work” (22); and, finally, poetry treated humanitarian sentiments in a literary register. Thus, variety and miscellany, presented within the regularity and repetition of a monthly journal, ensured that “this periodical will become worthy of the title it has assumed—that it will maintain the character of a firm and consistent, ‘Vegetarian Advocate’” (22). Carving out a consistent and recognizable persona within the cluttered publication market was, as Mussell and Beetham argue, an economic necessity for all periodicals, but the *Vegetarian Advocate*, which was not a commercial enterprise, had its own specific need for demonstrating and modelling steadfast consistency for readers. The *Advocate* needed to develop a consistent character, but it also wanted to help its readers develop into committed, dependable vegetarians—vegetarians of unwavering character who would practice across time, resist temptations, and form a reliable pattern of behaviour. Indeed, “consistency” was a requisite criterion for producing the character of vegetarians, but also for establishing the reputation of vegetarianism and for defending it against the scrutiny of

THE VEGETARIAN ADVOCATE. 33

The Vegetarian Advocate.

DOUGLAS, OCTOBER 15, 1848.

**IS THE PRACTICE OF EATING FLESH INJURIOUS TO MAN?**

ARTICLE I.

**T**HE practice of eating the flesh of animals, involves another practice which must precede it: viz, *the killing of animals*; and this, in the present day, involves another practice: *the rearing and fattening of animals for slaughter*. To begin with this latter practice, and proceed to the consideration of the two former, and the effects of the whole on man, individually and collectively, is the design of the present series of papers.

The process of rearing and fattening animals for slaughter, is anything but a profitable employment, either for the farmer's skill, capital, or land, compared with what a more judicious application of these might realize. John W. Childers, Esq., M.P., in the *Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society of England*, page 169, vol. I., gives the following statement as to the quantity of food consumed by 20 sheep, when enclosed in a fold for fattening, to which, for the sake of clearness, we have attached the prices of the various articles, the amount of which we have rather under-stated, in order that our calculations may be indisputable.

**FOOD PER DAY FOR 20 LEICESTER SHEEP ENCLOSED IN A FOLD FOR FATTENING.**

Articles Consumed.	Quantity.	Price.	Cost.
Turnips,	27 pecks,	3d.	1s 8½d
Limed-cake,	10 lbs.	1s.	0 10
Barley,	5 quarts,	1½d.	0 08
Salt,			0 02
Hay,			0 11
Total cost per day.....			2s 5d

Twenty sheep thus fed, are shown by the gentleman above alluded to, to have increased in weight from the 1st of Jan. to the 1st April (a period of 90 days), 36 stone 8 lbs. The account then stands thus:—

To feeding 20 sheep 90 days, at 2s. 5d. per day.....	£15 7 6
To 36 st. 8 lbs. of mutton (being the increase in 90 days),.....	12 10 0
at 7s. a stone .....	2 11 6
Loss to farmer .....	£15 7 6

In this calculation we have omitted the items labor and manure, which we think may be fairly set off against each other. We have put down the price of mutton at a much higher rate than farmers generally receive for it, as the same gentleman states that he sold '50 at Rother-

\* We have here stated 7s. a stone, which is the full value of the flesh, because it is generally supposed that in fattening, only the genuine flesh and fat are increased in weight, and not the bones and offal.

† *Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society of England*, vol. I. page 408.

ham in March, clipped, at from 42s. to 48s. per head;† and at that time it is shown in a previous table that they weigh from 12 to 13 stone. This is not 4s. a stone, whilst we have allowed 7s. In this calculation there are no deductions made for losses occasioned by the death of sheep from disease. There are no less than 26 diseases to which this misused animal is subject, since man has undertaken to feed and fatten it. It is evident from the above calculations, that it is not in the process of fattening that the farmer makes his profit, for every lb. of flesh he manufactures in this unnatural way, costs him at least 7d., which is about double the average price he sells at! How, then, does the farmer live? The fact is, previous to the animals being shut up to fatten, they are allowed to enjoy a certain degree of liberty. They are allowed to ramble up the hills and through the valleys, and to gather the food which nature has provided for them. The land is necessarily let to him in large quantities, and at a much lower rent than it would be worth if cultivated. By this plan (grazing), he can manage his farm with far less labor than if he were to use the plough or the spade; and instead of giving employment to the neighboring poor, he keeps one or two shepherds on several hundred acres of land, where he rears his flocks and his herds at comparatively little cost to himself, though at great cost to those who ought to 'sweat by sweat of their brow,' instead of being unable to exist on parochial relief or the result of a casual job of work! It is, then, before the fattening commences, that the farmer makes his profit, small though it be, compared with what the land would realize under judicious cultivation.

After spending a spring and a summer in the innocent sports of the green pastures, the sheep is shut up in a close pen or shed (the latter is recommended as the most economical in the quantity of food required), where it is made a prisoner for two or three months, at, as is shown above, an immense cost to the farmer. At the expiration of this period, it is doomed to die! Poor creature! it is almost dead already, for its buoyant spirit was never made to dwell in close confinement! Its limbs now can scarcely support its cumbrous load of 'dull mortality.' However, its life of natural innocence becomes a witness of scenes of cruelty and blood! One by one its fellow-prisoners are murdered, perhaps before its eyes. Its turn comes at last, and puts a stop to the palpitation of its bursting heart! Follow the carcass, which, after all the natural ornaments of its pure nature are stripped from it, is conveyed to the shambles for public inspection! Its unnatural imprisonment and over-feeding had rendered it a re-

Figure 1.4: *Vegetarian Advocate*, Leading Essay for October 15, 1848. This essay was the first of a three-part series on the question, "Is The Practice of Eating Flesh Injurious To Man?" *Vegetarian Society Archives*.

outsiders. CF Corlass, a vegetarian advocate from later in the century, argued in the *Dietetic Reformer*, "Vegetarians must be consistent, or outsiders will say they cannot do without flesh meat. Inconsistent, wavering vegetarians are like saplings that have become trees but have never borne fruit" (*DF*, Jan. 1883, 10). A regular periodical provided the structural support and model to guide wavering vegetarians toward habitual consistency.

We can see, then, that the word “character” in the journal’s prospectus resonates with two interrelated meanings, suggesting both the “character of this publication” (its persona and corporate identity) and the characters of the publication, that is, the lettering, typography, and appearance of each individual issue. Adopting a new title—that is, quite literally adopting new characters to represent the journal—afforded an opportunity for imprinting an understanding of vegetarianism upon readers. As James Mussell argues, the repetition of a journal’s material character (its form and layout) was central to establishing its immaterial character, or persona and tone (68). But, in the case of the *Vegetarian Advocate*, solidifying for readers “the character of this publication” (Sept. 1848, 21)—that is, its distinctive persona, but also its typography, materiality and layout, all of which were essential to the process of constructing a relationship with readers—allowed editors to further construct “the character of our work” (21), that is, the objectives and style of vegetarian advocacy. As the editors of the new *Vegetarian Advocate* further indicated, this goal of inscribing and infusing the character of vegetarianism in the minds and actions of readers was made possible by the cyclical rhythms and repetitions of periodical publishing. They used the space of the prospectus to reflect on their medium, the serial, and the way in which it structured the passage of time:

The commencement of a new yearly volume of a periodical, is always an interesting opportunity for reviewing the past, improving the present, and pointing to a hopeful future; but in the present instance it is especially so, for not only have we commenced a new volume, but we have adopted a new title, indicating more particularly the character of our work, and the spirit which we rejoice to say is gradually fusing itself into the thoughts, words, and actions of men (*VA*, Sept. 1848, 21).

The editors draw our attention to the fact that the periodical as a genre operates within overlapping periodicities, the yearly volume and the monthly issue: a new issue is released each month, but each discrete issue also constitutes part of a larger whole, the yearly volume. The commencement of a new yearly cycle creates this “opportunity” to step back from the smaller

monthly cycle, and to engage with readers and position their daily “thoughts, words, and actions” within a broader historical framework. It produces a pause and a punctuation mark that gives meaning to the passage of time. Significantly, the editors’ comments suggest the periodical does not simply reflect time, but creates it. That is, it creates a sense of timing, of periodicity and seasonality, a yearly calendar that it shares with readers as a function of its serialization. The serial’s division into numbered units (the monthly issue and the yearly volume in the case of the *Vegetarian Advocate*) reinforces the regularity of time’s passing; the journal’s editors suggest that the generic conventions of the serial are what orient and ground one within the flow of time. The form of serialization encourages one to think historically and teleologically: linked to the past, addressed to the present, and oriented toward the future, the periodical creates an historical, progressive sensibility. Put simply, the conventions of serialization produce this opportune moment for collective self-reflection and self-understanding. Notably, the beginning of a new volume is “*always* an interesting opportunity for reviewing the past” (Sept. 1848, 21; my emphasis), indicating that this annual review and self-historicization was a repetitive, perennial convention in Victorian print culture. But, while the management of time is implicit in all forms of serialized media, what is significant about the *Vegetarian Advocate*’s address “To Our Readers” is the editors’ explicit attention to the rhythms of their medium and to the distinct roles these rhythms play in structuring time. Their self-conscious demarcation of past, present, and future indicates that their periodical was particularly interested in developing a collective historical narrative from the commencement of its very first issue. This preface was not simply an opportunity for reviewing the past and looking to the future, but for temporally unifying the “our readers,” investing them in the same past history, present moment, and hopeful future. The periodical’s organization of time, its creation of synchronicity among a community of readers, made it a relevant tool for the VS, a society whose principal objective was to cultivate new habits.



The conventions of serialization, by fostering engagement with print over time, allowed the VS to develop a relationship with “our readers” and “gradually fus[e] itself into the thoughts, words, and actions of men” (Sept 1848, 21).

William Horsell, Secretary of the VS, initially published his previous journal, the *Truth-Tester*, on the Isle of Man, and, after the adoption of the new title, he continued to print the *Vegetarian Advocate*, from this location, but the taxes on the *Vegetarian Advocate*'s transmission over sea from the Isle of Man ultimately forced the VS to establish in London a central office “for the publication of the *Vegetarian Advocate*, and a depot for the sale of Vegetarian Publications” (Sept, 1849, 1). Despite the financial losses caused by the postage regulations, the VS greeted the establishment of its London office “as one of the most important steps in the history of the Society” (Sept, 1849, 1), a society which was still, of course, only two years old. William Horsell printed subsequent issues of the *Vegetarian Advocate* on a steam-powered press in London.<sup>13</sup> In May 1850, the *Vegetarian Advocate* announced a “Vegetarian Entertainment” to celebrate the opening of Horsell's new “Steam Machine and General Printing Offices” on Paternoster Row. Employees of the press and Horsell's London friends were treated to a vegetarian repast of “barley, sago and apple, and carrot puddings made according to recipes in the *Penny Domestic Assistant*, Nos. 54, 55, 56” (*VA*, May 1850, 110), demonstrating the close connection between periodical publishing, serialization (recipes Nos. 54, 55, 56), and the formation of vegetarian eating patterns and a vegetarian movement. In what follows, I advance my reading of the journal's serial form by analysing individual compartments outlined in the prospectus: “Vegetarian Intelligence,” “The Progress of the Movement,” and “The Leading Essay.”

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<sup>13</sup> However, despite the promising relocation of Horsell's printing press to London, the *Vegetarian Advocate* ceased publication in 1851—not, it would appear, from lack of interest or support in London, but because of doctrinal differences between Horsell and James Simpson, the VS's president and patron. *The Vegetarian*, the VS's current quarterly, published a brief article on Horsell and Simpson's quarrel in 2014. Simpson, we learn, placed his support behind the Manchester-based *Vegetarian Messenger*, establishing this northern city as the centre of vegetarian activity and publishing (*Vegetarian*, Summer 2014, 17).

### **“Vegetarian Intelligence”: Henry Stephens Clubb, a Vegetarian Pastor**

Henry Stephens Clubb, with whom I opened part one of this dissertation, served as a public lecturer, local correspondent, and secretary in the early VS; his name appeared frequently in the pages of the *Vegetarian Advocate* and, later, the *Vegetarian Messenger*. He provides a point of reference to demonstrate how the VS began to integrate print media into the practice of everyday life and how it developed tactics to make vegetarian subjects. Born in Colchester, Suffolk in 1827, Clubb first made the acquaintance of president James Simpson through correspondence, which was published in issue one of the *Vegetarian Advocate*.<sup>14</sup> His first letter began, “Dear Friend, Never having had the pleasure of corresponding with you before, I waited till leisure would allow me sufficient time to express the interest I feel in the movement in which you are so zealously and successfully engaged” (*VA*, Sept 1848, 25). From this point on, Clubb too zealously engaged in the vegetarian movement, becoming a frequent lecturer on its principles as well as contributor to its journals. In his introductory letter to Simpson, Clubb presented vegetarianism as a struggle on behalf of nonhuman animals: “we should take up the cause of the oppressed, not only of a human form” (25). Slaves, the poor, the sick, and other oppressed groups were all becoming the objects of social reform and philanthropic salvation in the mid-nineteenth century, but Clubb’s phrase, “not only of a human form” (25), seems specifically to call into question the importance of the human figure and the “frames of recognition” (Butler, *Account*, 22) that attribute moral value only to the human shape. Clubb described his immediate plan of action to help those not of human form: to organize a local “Branch Vegetarian Society” in his hometown of Colchester (*VA*, Sept 1848, 25). As he argued, “wherever there are three vegetarians, a society should be formed, and the members would soon increase” (25). Three vegetarians, for Clubb, constituted a society,

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<sup>14</sup> For biographical information on Clubb, see James Gregory’s article, “A Michigander, A Patriot, and A Gentleman,” in *Voices*, an online journal for the *Kansas Collection*.

which, by “meeting at private houses at first” (25), would gradually augment its numbers and strengthen “the great body” of the Manchester-based VS (25). Clubb and other vegetarians envisioned their movement as a Christian movement, that is, as a misunderstood sect that, like the early Christian gospel, disseminated itself through underground meetings of devoted adherents. In his letter, he explained his tactics for shepherding others toward a life of vegetarianism: “I have generally two or three under my management, whom I endeavour to supply with food suited to their mental developments. Two or three have been trying vegetarianism for several months [in Colchester], and I believe are about to join the society” (25). Clubb’s methods for the dissemination of vegetarianism relied on a very literal form of pastoral power: he fed and cultivated human beings. Clubb’s stated motives for feeding humans rather than fattening animals were simultaneously humane and pastoral; that is, he wanted to extend charity to nonhuman animals and to cultivate better human animals. Or as Clubb himself asked, “would it not be more charitable to allow our fellow creatures, men, women, and children, to be fed in a wholesome way from the land, instead of bringing into existence beasts to be cruelly treated and cruelly murdered!” (25). By showing humanity toward creatures “not only of a human form” (25), Clubb aimed to bring humans, rather than sheep and cattle, into pastoral subjection. The fact that Clubb referred to the deaths of animals as murder, a term reserved for the unlawful killing of humans, and the very ambiguity of the phrase, “our fellow creatures” (25)—which can, clearly, refer to “men, women, and children,” but also frequently denoted nonhuman animals—reinforce the impression that Clubb wanted to question the pre-eminence of the human form, or at the very least that he saw human and nonhuman animals as comparable “creatures” who could be fed, managed, and improved. Clubb believed that by caring for humans, and by teaching them to care for themselves through vegetarianism, he could indirectly and strategically mitigate the cruel treatment and murder of nonhuman animals.

The VS's immediate plans for further dissemination, as they were discussed and celebrated in the first issue of the *Vegetarian Advocate* (Sept 1848), closely followed Clubb's model of setting up branch societies in local communities and of employing the individual efforts of the VS's members. The VS's officers and its journal did not themselves address the general public; rather, this duty was reserved for members, who were encouraged to "say a word, write a line, give a tract, or make a speech, to promote so noble an object!" (Sept 1848, 23). The VS outlined its own duties in creating a social movement by pointing out that, "[a] society affords its sanction and the weight of numbers to a movement; but, beyond this, its most important objects are committed to the individual advocacy of its members" (23). A curious phrase, the "weight of numbers" suggests the importance, or rhetorical power, attributed to numbers—the belief that numbers reflect irrefutable facts—but it also refers to the physical mass of the increasing number of vegetarians. Behind it lay the twin assumptions that there was strength in numbers, and that the VS could quantify its force in numbers.

One of the first steps the VS took in order to augment its numbers and orchestrate the activism of its members was the appointment of "local secretaries, for large towns or counties" (23). Local Secretaries were selected for their zeal and dedication to the cause. Their purpose was to create "centres of action, around which the efforts of more private duty will be concentrated" (23). In creating concentrated centres of vegetarian activity, the secretaries offered social support for newcomers. Clubb and his brother, R.T. Clubb, both served as secretaries for Salford and Colchester respectively; importantly, their duties required that they report back to the VS via written correspondence, setting up a postal-pastoral network to monitor the progress of the vegetarian flock. Under the monthly headings, "Vegetarian Intelligence," the *Vegetarian Advocate* documented the activities of the brothers Clubb, while it also recorded public lectures, meetings and debates (figure 1.5). This monthly column published accounts, sent by local secretaries, of

“their public and private efforts to extend the principles and practice of our society” (*VA*, Sept 1848, 21). For instance, in a letter sent from Colchester, Clubb announced that, even though he had been away for several months in Manchester, vegetarianism was still progressing in this little town (see figure 1.5). Upon his return, he was greeted by “the declaration of membership of a gentleman, the head of an interesting family, which he reports as gradually adopting the Vegetarian Practice” (*VA*, Oct 1848, 36). Clubb targeted the male head of the family. He recorded this gentleman’s verbal declaration of membership in his correspondence to the *VS*, which the *VS* was then published and displayed as evidence of progress in its journal, uniting the press, the pen, and the tongue to advertise and extend vegetarianism. Here we see the potential of the press in creating a national flock: it made the individual declaration of this gentleman seem part of a collective and unified movement. The account of the gentleman’s conversion appeared on the page alongside accounts from other towns and villages throughout England. Clubb informed readers that in St. Osyth, “Vegetarianism is gradually working its way in this secluded village” (36), while his brother similarly wrote from Suffolk that “another family has commenced the practice in good earnest” (36); he further informed readers that the vegetarians of Stratford St. Mary were planning “to meet occasionally for mutual enlightenment and encouragement” (36). Reading about the plans and progress in these villages would in turn offer encouragement to distant readers. Each local secretary reported back to the journal, corresponding on the progress of vegetarianism in his or her town or city, and for the reader it produced the impression of a national movement: throughout England—in East Bergholt, Stratford St. Mary, Brightlinsea, St. Osyth, London, Birmingham, Harrogate, Wollaston, Leeds, Chesterfield, Derby, Malton, Preston, Accrington, Worcester, Manchester, Hull, and even on the Isle of Man—people were, like the family in Colchester, discovering the truths of vegetarianism.

## Vegetarian Intelligence.

EAST BERGHOLT, SUFFOLK.—I have great pleasure in informing your readers, that Vegetarianism has found its way into this delightful village, and that there is at least one large family faithfully practising, as an experiment, abstinence from the flesh of their *departed fellow-creatures*. The experiment goes on most satisfactorily.

STRATFORD ST. MARY.—Since I last reported progress, another family has commenced the practise in good earnest. The above two pleasant villages are within a mile and a half of each other, and there is a great desire amongst the Vegetarians of both, to meet occasionally for mutual enlightenment and encouragement. This will be arranged as soon as a suitable room can be obtained for the purpose. R. T. C.

COLCHESTER.—Although I have been absent from my duties in this town for several months, I find I have left the good cause in most efficient hands. My local secretary *pro tem.*, writes me—‘I possess a greater amount of spiritual delight than I ever before experienced, and feel it to be an additional blessing to have a Vegetarian wife and family. I am laboring in every quarter I can think of, spreading the principles, and paving the way for your return, when I trust you will find a very great alteration in the habits of many you little expected, on leaving Colchester for Manchester.’ This was accompanied with the declaration of membership of a gentleman, the head of an interesting family, which he reports as gradually adopting the Vegetarian practice. Another interesting event [recorded in another part of our paper.—Ed.], has caused considerable consternation amongst the *mothers* in the neighborhood, as it is the first Vegetarian birth which is known to have occurred in this ancient town. Another Vegetarian correspondent informs me, with respect to this happy event, after relating the circumstance—‘I had the pleasure of nursing this remarkably fine child yesterday (the day after its birth). I heard its mother talking rather loud to her baby as soon as I went into the house, so you may

Figure 1.5: “Intelligence” from the *Vegetarian Advocate*, October 1848, 36. *Google Books*.

The gentleman’s declaration was not the only interesting news from Colchester. Clubb also documented “the first Vegetarian Birth which is known to have occurred in this ancient town” (*VA*, Oct 1848, 36). By being reported in the *Vegetarian Advocate*, the propagation of a new vegetarian could, through the press, become propaganda. The vegetarian birth signalled not only a new vegetarian, but a new argument in favour of vegetarianism. The health and happiness of the mother and child silenced “the entreaties of mistaken and but well-meaning friends” (36) and demonstrated that vegetarianism could support life, giving “encouragement to many mothers to persevere in a *right course*” (36). Founded by men, the VS, as food reform movement, inevitably had to appeal to the domestic and reproductive labour of women. But, if its advocacy implied a

gendered division of labour—men publicly advocated vegetarianism; women produced vegetarians—we should note that directly below this notice on a vegetarian birth, readers learned of a female vegetarian advocate in the town of Harrogate: “A zealous female member reports favourably of this locality. Two or three have recently joined the society, and others are abstaining” (36). By aligning food and cooking with social reform, the vegetarian movement, as I detail in a later chapter on Beatrice Lindsay, offered women a field of public agency that could still seem congruent with their traditional domestic roles.

All the individual stories of vegetarian conversions and births were given unity in the periodical. Local secretaries and individuals carried out advocacy in the family circle, the private meeting, and the local community, but the VS and its journal formed these actions into a national movement. The periodical gave readers the impression that they, their individual deeds, were part of the onward march progress. The *Vegetarian Advocate*, for instance, introduced its correspondence on the “Progress of the Movement” by anticipating that,

It will be gratifying to all our readers to know that vegetarian principles are steadily progressing. Almost every post brings us cheering news, or indications that a spirit of enquiry on the subject is taking hold of thinking minds. The circulation of the Report of the Banquet is still telling powerfully in favor of our views, and many who have read it are either taking less flesh, or have given it up altogether. (*VA*, Oct. 1848, 36)

The objective of the *Vegetarian Advocate* was to gratify its readers, to keep them informed and interested in the activities of the VS; and it was gratifying for readers to know that they were part of a movement that was steadily progressing, to have their opinions confirmed and validated. Vegetarian advocacy began, as Clubb said, by feeding potential converts; it continued, through the periodical, by feeding them with information, by orienting their attention toward the progress of the movement. The post brought daily news of progress, which the periodical in turn documented, organized and related to readers, thereby working to integrate and unify the movement. The post and the press were physical media for the movement of vegetarian news, for

carrying vegetarian ideas from one place to another, but this circulation could itself be taken as a sign progress. Self-reflexively calling attention to progress was another way of encouraging further progress; it bolstered the resolve of readers and inspired those fighting on behalf of the cause to hope for its success. The *Vegetarian Advocate* actively worked to create a sense of momentum by publicizing, each month, all the towns, villages, and hamlets in which vegetarianism was gradually taking root. In the following sections, I want to further discuss how, in addition to unifying the movement through the distribution of information, the periodical itself carried a message to readers through its form, instructing them in the self-conduct and self-making.

### **“The Progress of the Movement”: making history in the present**

I would like to turn our focus to another one of the *Vegetarian Advocate*'s regular features identified in the prospectus: “The Progress of the Movement” (figure 1.6). Each month under this heading, the *Vegetarian Advocate* documented “cheering evidences of the growth of our principles” (*VA*, Feb 1849, 83), thereby providing “a history of the present, such as may be regarded in the future as a faithful record of the past” (*VA*, Sept. 1848, 23). The monthly periodical, as “a history of the present” (23), encouraged readers to think of the present as the future’s past. The periodical circulated vegetarian ideas, but its serial format, by creating, as noted, opportunities “for reviewing the past, improving the present, and pointing to a hopeful future” (23), also informed the self-historicizing impulse of vegetarians—their desire to carve out a cannon of texts and authors extending back to Pythagoras. The individual vegetarian was meant to regard his or her life from the point of view of history: the vegetarian worked toward progress, advancing the movement, but he or she also situated this daily activity in an historical narrative. This retrospective view of the present—the present as always-already a part of history—was, as I am suggesting, a function of the genre of the serial: as a “date-stamped commodity” (Beetham 21) predicated on ephemerality, the periodical addressed the present, but also oriented readers’ interest toward the



next issue. The newness of the current issue carried with it the foreknowledge that it would soon become the past issue: here today, gone tomorrow, as Beetham says. Each new issue presented itself as a response to the needs of the day, but the editors of the *Vegetarian Advocate* were already looking forward to that time when the individual issues would be bound together in volume form and placed on the shelf as an historical record of the vegetarian movement. I want to suggest here that the serial form, as the historicization of the present, reinforced “the serial attention” (Foucault 106) of the dietary regimen.<sup>15</sup> Vegetarian periodicals provided information on food and diet, but the generic characteristics of the form also reflected and reinforced the conduct of a dietary regimen. The VS not only used periodicals as a means to an end, or as material objects to carry its message to a wider public; rather, it also integrated the cultural rhythms of periodicity into the very construction of vegetarianism. The temporal orientation of the press constructed vegetarianism as a goal to work towards: through its monthly documentation of the movement, it transformed everyday life into a teleological project of self-formation, a project in which an action was seen not in isolation, but as part of larger whole or series; that is to say, individual vegetarians were encouraged to see their daily behaviour not as isolated, unrelated acts, but as part of pattern of conduct that constituted their whole being. To control and manage one’s conduct, to bring it into conformity with a declaration of abstinence, required that one think serially; a meal was not just a meal, but was part of a series, a regimen, a way of being, and, more broadly, part of the progress of the vegetarian movement. The monthly periodical reinforced this serialization of life.

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<sup>15</sup> I borrow the phrase “serial attention” from Michel Foucault, who, in *The Use of Pleasure*, applies it to the practices of the self in classical philosophy. The practice of dietetics, for example, “required what we might call a ‘serial’ attention; that is, an attention to sequences: activities were not simply good or bad in themselves; their value was determined in part by those that preceded them or those that followed” (106). If, as Foucault argues, the technique of dietetics requires a “serial attention,” I want to suggest that the serial periodical contributed to the serialization of life, the tendency to see actions as part of a sequence or larger whole.

The periodical and vegetarianism came together to transform life into a teleological project of self-fashioning in which each moment and action were preparation for the future.

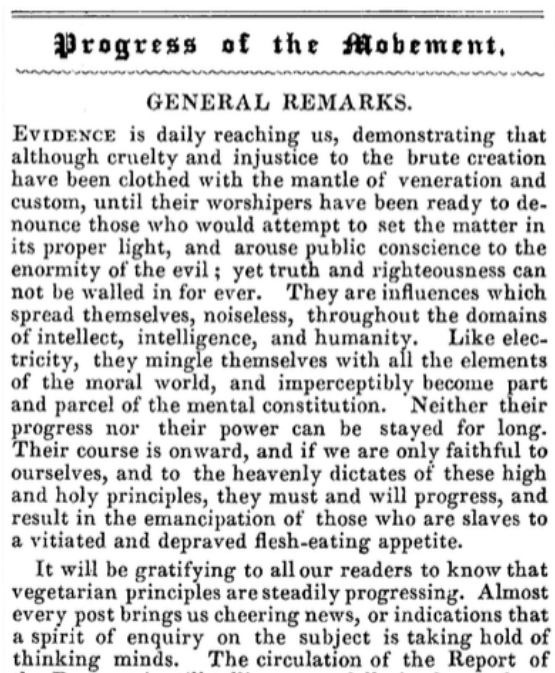


Figure 1.6: *Vegetarian Advocate*, “Progress of the Movement,” October 15, 1848. *Google Books*

The VS, let us say, had two needs: to encourage individuals to practice a vegetarian diet, and to encourage them to work for the vegetarian movement. The first of these goals needed to be presented as attainable: one could become, and live as, a vegetarian. But, to ensure the continued perseverance of its members, the society presented the “vegetarian movement” as always in a state of incompleteness; it was progressing, but never finished. Rest was not an option; the vegetarians’ work was never done. Much like the medium through which it disseminated itself, vegetarianism was always looking forward to the promising future, never realized in present moment. The VS adopted the media technologies of the Victorian period, but this media ecology also shaped its future orientation and constitutive incompleteness.

## The Leading Article: “Vegetarianism and Education”

In its February 1849 issue, the *Vegetarian Advocate*'s leading article, “Vegetarianism and Education,” defined vegetarianism as a Foucauldian practice of self-formation and serial attention. Drawing a parallel between Foucault’s “arts of existence” (*Use of Pleasure* 10-11) and the nineteenth-century VS is not as tenuous as it might seem insofar as the vegetarians returned to the same classical source material as Foucault.<sup>16</sup> The Pythagoreans were, according to Foucault, responsible for the development of dietary self-government (102), while Pythagoras was, claimed the nineteenth-century vegetarians, the first vegetarian, an individual who abstained from flesh in principle and practice.<sup>17</sup> Yet Foucault and the nineteenth-century vegetarians had, of course, historically different reasons for returning to these classical sources. Foucault saw in ancient practices of the self a technique for resisting modern disciplinary mechanisms—a technique, that is, for constructing new forms of subjectivity that were not tied to the state (“Subject” 785)—while the vegetarians of the nineteenth century adopted care of the self as a strategic way of mitigating cruelty to animals and as a mechanism of subject formation. Clubb, as we noted, advocated teaching others to care for themselves through a vegetable diet as an effective means of limiting the murder of animals. “Vegetarianism and Education,” one of the *Vegetarian Advocate*'s early statements on vegetarianism, similarly argued that one practiced vegetarianism “because it is cruel to kill, opposed to true civilization, and true justice, to mercy, to kindness, and to all those finer and nobler feelings which form the brightest ornaments to human character” (Feb. 1849, 82). However, the bulk of the article focused not on these *moral* arguments for abstinence

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<sup>16</sup> Howard Williams’ *The Ethics of Diet*, which was first serialized in the *Vegetarian Messenger* between 1878 and 1883, begins with entries on Hesiod, Pythagoras, Plato, Plutarch, Pythagoras, and Seneca, classical philosophers who are also touchstones for Foucault.

<sup>17</sup> Pythagoras also supplied the VS with its motto, which vegetarians recited at banquets and emblazoned on the front cover of their journals: “Fix on that course of life which is most excellent, and custom will render it the most delightful.” In other words, one set upon a course of abstinence because, first of all, it was the right thing to do, and repetition would later naturalize it.

(kindness, mercy, civilization), but on the effects of abstinence on the practitioner; that is, as I will discuss, it focused on the form rather than the content of abstinence, detailing how practicing abstinence gave an intentional shape and structure to everyday life. In this way it gave abstinence a productive element: moral subjects did not decide to practice abstinence; rather, the practice of abstaining transformed one into a moral subject. “Vegetarianism and Education” argued that vegetarianism constituted something more than a negation of the norm, defining it instead as form of education that transformed daily life into a project of self-government and self-formation.

The article began by pointing out that, historically, the wealthy ate meat while the majority subsisted on grains and vegetables, practicing abstinence out of necessity rather than choice. In its nineteenth-century incarnation, however, vegetarianism came to entail a conscientious decision; this adoption of a vegetable diet placed one in a lineage of moral and intellectual figures who had abstained from flesh as a principle. The article cited the classical philosophers, Pythagoras and Plutarch, and more recent humanitarians, Franklin, Newton, Wesley and Howard, as precursors and examples, thus carving out an historical identity for vegetarians. As Craig Calhoun notes, early social movements were often animated by a sense of tradition, but he cautions against seeing it simply as continuity with the past; instead, he contends that we need to “see tradition as grounded less in the historical past than in everyday social practice” (84). The traditions mobilizing collective action in the nineteenth century were not necessarily “ancient,” but, he argues, may have been “of relatively recent creation or revision” (Calhoun 42). The invention of a vegetarian tradition represented a way of organizing collective action in the present by giving historical meaning to everyday practice. This self-historicizing was an act of self-creation that helped to unify the vegetarian movement. Constructing an historical tradition of vegetarian texts and authors imbued the movement with scholarly respectability, associating it with the Victorian

encyclopaedic desire to organize, disseminate, and promote knowledge in print. The article defined intentional vegetarianism against mere abstinence, or abstinence from necessity:

By Vegetarianism we do not imply a *mere* system of abstinence from eating the flesh of animals, for such a system has always been the practice of a vast majority of the human race; but by Vegetarianism we mean that system which has been adopted by prophets and philosophers at different periods of the world, as calculated to increase the freedom and consequent power of the moral and intellectual faculties; to prepare the mind to withstand temptations to immorality and crime [...] It is a Vegetarianism of the *mind* as well as the *body*. (*VA*, Feb 1848, 81)

The article, which echoes many of the claims in Clubb's public lectures, presented philosophical vegetarianism as a "calculated" (81) system for taking control of one's conduct and for forming oneself as an ethical subject. The "first motive for its adoption" (80), such as health or economics, came to matter less than the effect it had on the formation of subjectivity. According to the article, the determined decision to become a vegetarian, to alter one's dietary habits and abstain from flesh as a "*conscientious principle*" (81), radically re-oriented one's life and perception of life. As soon as one abstained "from a certain kind of food for *conscience sake*" (81), one recognized the importance of material conduct in the work of creating oneself. The practice of *conscientious* abstinence "reminds him [the abstainer] every day of the connexion between his outward conduct and inward feeling: his sense of justice, of mercy, or of truth" (81). It is important to note here that the abstainer's outward conduct did not simply give expression to his already-held inner beliefs (of justice and mercy). It was, rather, precisely the opposite: outward conduct and everyday activity were tools for shaping one's inner subjectivity. The VS had an almost deterministic view of its diet, believing that the regimen would exert a moralizing influence on the practitioners: vegetarianism "leads him [the vegetarian] to perceive that every action of his life, whether eating or drinking, thinking or speaking, is continually exercising a certain degree of influence over his mind—is continually *exercising, training* him for a worse or a better condition" (81, emphasis in

original). Whether we are aware of it or not, simple activities shape us morally, intellectually, and physiologically, but, by practicing vegetarianism, one can take an active role in training one's body and mind. One might begin to abstain from flesh "because it is cruel to kill" (80), but the continued practice of the diet (particularly the dislocation it effected in one's social life) reacted back upon the practitioner, reorienting him or her toward the importance of "outward conduct" (81) in the formation of the self.

Vegetarianism, as the article defined it, thus represented not mere abstinence, a negation, but a positive form of *exercise*, the continual *training* of the self, a form of education that extended beyond the book and the schoolroom into everyday life: "It is the *education of life* [...] an education which affects our fire-sides and our dinner-tables; our kitchens and our drawing-rooms; our morning walks and our social *soirees*; our private and our public intercourse" (81). One could not compartmentalize the practice of vegetarianism. It pervaded every space of private and public life; it was coextensive with life. One was always and everywhere a vegetarian, and thus one was always and everywhere training, educating, and shaping oneself into a vegetarian. In the pages of the periodical and in everyday existence, vegetarianism came into being through repetition: that is, through the journal's monthly reiterations and articulations of the movement, and through the individual's constant and repeated training of himself at the fireside, the dinner table, and the drawing-room.

Perhaps most importantly for my argument on serialization and a serial attention, the conscientious practice of abstaining from flesh taught one "to regard the present not for itself alone, but as a preparation for the future" (Feb 1849, 81). In looking to the future, vegetarianism created, and necessitated, a serialized life that closely integrated reading and eating practices. Vegetarianism aimed at a unified, consistent, and sequential mode of conduct, in which "every action of his [the vegetarian's] life, whether eating or drinking, thinking or speaking," was valued

“not for itself alone” (81), but as part of a series, as a stage in the continual advancement and progress of life. To be a vegetarian required that one see daily activities (eating and drinking) as accumulative and progressive stages in the production of one’s moral identity; successful adherence to the regime demanded that one see a connection between the present moment and future rewards. Its practice taught the practitioner “that activity in any particular direction to-day, prepares us for the still greater activity tomorrow [...] that every moment is a preparation for its successor” (81). The vegetarian cultivation of mind and body organized life into a sequence of successive and interconnected moments toward self-completion, “the realization of a more virtuous life” (81). Hence, it began to look very similar to the serial culture of its medium, which was similarly oriented toward the future and successive issues.

I want to suggest, then, that a complementary, reciprocal relationship between eating and reading developed within the VS; vegetarianism’s manner of self-representation was shaped and consolidated by its material forms. Just as the periodical influenced readers to regard the present issue as the future’s past, conscientious vegetarianism (as defined and represented by the *Vegetarian Advocate*) taught the eater to regard “each moment [as] preparation for its successor” (81). The disciplined regimen of vegetarianism teaches you, but also requires of you, a “serial attention,” an attention to sequential progress. It was the objective of the *Vegetarian Advocate* to instruct readers in this vegetarian lesson, to teach what vegetarianism teaches: vegetarianism, it argued, was a form of education, “a philosophical system of training and instruction” (81), that instructs us to regard the present moment a part of a series of moments. But the journal also put forward its definition of vegetarianism in a serial form which itself oriented readers toward the forthcoming issue. Indeed, “Vegetarianism and Education” was part of a series of papers that placed the vegetarian question alongside other questions; future articles in the series included “Vegetarianism and Temperance” (April 1849), “Vegetarianism and Early Closing” (June 1849),

and “Vegetarianism and Sanitary Reform” (Aug 1849). Hence, the essay itself contributed to the definition of vegetarianism, but its serialization informed the mode of vigilance brought to bear on the body and daily habits in the practice of vegetarianism. A vegetarian education, as the incessant training of oneself through repetition, taught one to regard each moment not in isolation but in relation to the future; each moment and action of life was part of a series building towards, and making possible, a better future. The VS used its periodical as an educational tool to disseminate information on vegetarianism, and this leading article, “Vegetarianism and Education,” one of the first statements defining vegetarianism in the *Vegetarian Advocate*, was itself part of that education, but the form of the periodical contributed to how they framed, articulated and defined the daily practice of vegetarianism for readers; the periodicity of the medium reinforced the view “that every moment is a preparation for its successor” (81), and it helped create the “serial attention” required to sustain a dietetic regimen. Much the way the current issue is always anticipating the release of next number to collect and consume, vegetarianism, as the calculated management of one’s life, “leads him [the practitioner] to regard the present not for itself alone, but as a preparation for the future” (81).

The VS, in “Vegetarianism and Education,” thus defined vegetarianism as an exercise of self-transformation, and, in doing so, it forged a strong relationship between the principles and tactics of the VS, or between the VS’s message and its principal tool for disseminating that message. The achievement of a vegetarian subjectivity, and a progressive vegetarian movement, necessitated the development of a serial way of being, in which all forms of activity, whether at the fireside or the dinner table, on a morning walk or in social soiree, accrued meaning sequentially, serially, and relationally, and the form of the periodical reinforced this view, orienting vegetarianism and vegetarians toward a teleological objective, or what Foucault calls the “*telos* of the ethical subject” (28). The VS adopted the periodical not simply to disseminate disembodied



information on vegetarianism, but to constitute the mode of being, habits, subjectivity, and self-recognition. To be a vegetarian, one had to submit to its rule of abstinence willingly, and to recognize oneself as an ethical subject obligated to practice it. As “Vegetarianism and Education” argued, the “happy thought” that “every moment is a preparation for its successor” needed to be imprinted on the mind, or “daguerreotyped there by our active cooperation” (81). The daguerreotype, an early form of photography, was among the new media of the Victorian period, a new technology that made the transmission of information seem increasingly immaterial, a way of “writing with light” (Menke 20). Its reference here, in “Vegetarianism and Education,” suggests the aims and aspirations of the *Vegetarian Advocate*: to infuse and diffuse, invisibly and ethereally, the spirit of vegetarianism among “men,” to inscribe on their minds the attitude of self-recognition that caused one to follow the code of abstinence, and to see oneself as part of part of the vegetarian movement.

## **Conclusion**

If we look at the “Preface” of the *Vegetarian Advocate*, which introduced the bound Volume One for the years 1848-1849, we can see how the journal sought to create a correspondence between its serial form and its readers. As noted, Turner is one of the few critics to point out the constitutive “pause” in the notion of “periodical-ness” and its importance in the creation of meaning (194). In this preface, the editors drew attention to a suspension in periodicity that offered an opportunity to interact with readers and to solidify temporal symmetry. Its opening began with a sentimental journey, and concluded by enlisting the reader in an “alliance”:

As the traveller when leaving some peaceful valley to wend his way upon the green hill side, will pause now and then to take a longing glance of the dear spot which he is leaving, so we amid the unceasing labour of our literary calling, pause occasionally to look back upon the past, and to gladden our hearts with its green memories, that we may go on rejoicing. The completion of another volume brings us face to face with our readers, and demands that we should celebrate the occasion by the candid assurances and sincere

acknowledgements of grateful hearts; and beg that those who meet us now, upon the waning of the present, and the dawning of new labours, will greet us with smiling welcome, and cheer us by the closeness of their alliance in the arduous but hopeful labours which lie before—onward (Preface 1).

Unlike the prospectus to the first issue, which inaugurated the relationship between the new vegetarian title and its readers, this preface comes at the “completion,” not the commencement, of the yearly volume. Introducing readers to the completed and bound edition of Volume One, it stands outside of the periodical itself and thus it stands outside of “periodical time” (Turner), outside of its schedule of “unceasing labour” (1) and publishing. The longer cycle of the yearly volume offers the editors an opportunity to look back and pause, and it demonstrates that periodicals, while ever pushing readers “onward” toward the future, simultaneously create a nostalgia for the past and, indeed, for the present, which, amid the unceasing labour of periodical publishing, tends toward increasing ephemerality or “waning” (1). The perspective of this prefatory passage, its longing glance backward and determination to move forward, reflects the temporal orientation of its medium, the serialized periodical, each issue of which connects to those that came before it and anticipates those that follow it. The “now” of the “waning of the present” (1) stands between, or is split by, past and future, just as each date-stamped issue of the periodical represents a waning moment between past and future numbers. This preface works to construct the serial attention of the collective subject, the vegetarian “we” of this passage, who stands in the waning present looking back at the past and forward to future. This serial organization of vegetarianism bridged the gap between the individual practice and the social movement, yoking the serial vigilance brought to bear on the body to a sense of collectivity among the group. Vegetarianism was both personal, as the daily disciplining of oneself into a vegetarian, and part of the collective march forward, a shared journey that was punctuated and structured by “the completion of another volume” (1). The periodical thus invested the

individual's daily acts of eating into an overarching narrative of historical progress. By consuming differently, one felt—or ought to feel—oneself as a part of “an alliance” (1) and a social movement. Readers were encouraged to regard every action of life, “whether eating or drinking, speaking or thinking” (Feb 1848, 81), as incremental steps on the journey toward progress, and thus to regard themselves not in isolation but as part of broader collective movement.

Ironically, perhaps, the editors express nostalgia not simply for the past, but for a form of communication that their print media was working to displace: face-to-face conversation. The purpose of the society's journal, as this preface, was to provide a substitute for the face-to-face contact and the personal intimacy experienced, for example, at First Annual Banquet, where “those who had long corresponded—long felt the flow of human kindness between each other, without any personal knowledge—here met face to face; and what the pen had failed to express, and what the tongue could not give utterance to, was plainly indicated by the countenance, or glistened through the eye” (Report 1). The journal was the substitute for those who could not be reached by the tear-stained glance or warm flow of human kindness. This affective relationship with readers is directly tied to the yearly cycle of the periodical, the completion of which creates, like the Annual Meeting, an event and “occasion” on the calendar: “The completion of another volume brings us face to face with our readers, and *demand*s that we should celebrate the occasion” (Preface 1). But, as Laurel Brake reminds us and this passage demonstrates, “completion” is an illusion: “there is always the next number to consume, to collect” (Brake 31), and there are always “hopeful labours which lie before” (Preface 1). For Brake, periodicity fosters consumer desire. This orientation of the press, to which Victorian readers were well-habituated, informed the vegetarian movement, instilled it with the very concept of movement, and encouraged vegetarian advocates to look “onward” and to “new labours” with “grateful hearts” (1).

## 2. The *Vegetarian Messenger*: Eating in an Information Age

The previous chapter looked at the content of the *Vegetarian Advocate* (its prospectus, leading articles, banquet reports, prefaces), relating early representations of vegetarianism to the journal's serial form. I suggested that the genre of the press reinforced the image of vegetarianism as a regimen of training and self-transformation. In this section, I would like to advance this argument on the serialization of life by looking more closely at how the VS organized printed information to establish the cultural legitimacy of the vegetable diet and to organize vegetarianism into a system of knowledge, or what vegetarians themselves called the "vegetarian system" (VM, Sept. 1849, 2). In my analysis, I turn from the *Vegetarian Advocate* to the *Vegetarian Messenger*, which succeeded the *Advocate* as the official journal of vegetarianism. My aim here is to unpack how the VS made use of serial print media to legitimate its diet, consolidate the commitment of its members, and concretize the imagined community of vegetarians.

The VS seized upon the discourse of information (in the form of printed statistics, numerical tables, and facts) as the means to effect social change. The first objective of the VS was, after all, "to induce habits of Abstinence from the Flesh of Animals as Food by the dissemination of information upon the subject" (VM, Sept. 1849, front cover). As such, the management and circulation of information were central features of the vegetarian movement. The information it disseminated can be roughly divided into two categories: information on the VS itself (its membership, publications, activities, meetings, and progress) and information on food and nutrition (the chemical composition and economic costs of different foods, the anatomy of the human body). The publication of facts and figures on the vegetarian diet (on its frugality, alleged naturalness, nutritional superiority, and compatibility with human anatomy) would, its advocates hoped, convince others to try it. More difficult, however, was making them stick with the experiment. Here too the discourse of information played a role. Menu plans, precise recipes,

dietary tables, and shopping guides all gave structure to daily life and helped novices in their conversion; more importantly, the publication of the VS's statistics of membership, which listed not only the number of members in the society, but also their genders, occupations, and years of abstinence, brought flesh abstainers into consciousness of themselves as a distinct corporate body. Historians of the nineteenth century tend to follow Foucault in regarding demographic statistics as a technology of surveillance and social control (Levitan 4; Crook and O'Hara 13), or what Mary Poovey terms "ocular inspection, quantification, and calculation" (36). I too draw from Foucault, and from historians influenced by him, but I want to suggest that the VS appropriated and mimicked the authority of statistics and the census not only for disciplinary purposes, but also for the purpose of forming a collective identity.<sup>18</sup>

In an analysis of nineteenth-century antislavery almanacs, Teresa Goddu has convincingly demonstrated that the "antislavery movement's discursive and distributional strategies were closely connected" (130). The material form of the almanac and its discourse of numeracy, she argues, reinforced antislavery's modes of representation and located the movement within the emergence of a market culture (130). Drawing on Goddu and scholars of nineteenth-century statistics, I similarly want to suggest that the vegetarian movement's representational and distributional strategies were interrelated through its use of numerical serialization and statistics. The organization of vegetarian publications into serialized numbers, the documentation of vegetarians according to statistical categories, and the presentation of vegetarian recipes and meals in numbered tables, all helped make the "Vegetarian System" seem systematic, uniting the material forms and discursive claims of the movement. Foregrounding the organization of its

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<sup>18</sup> Here I take inspiration from Levitan, who, *contra* Foucault, argues that "that the census helped not only in creating national identities but also in confirming and defining group identities within the nation" (6).

tracts, publications, statistics, tables, and recipes, the VS used the newly authoritative language of information to represent itself to the public and to constitute itself as a counter-public.

However, the relationship between serialization (the print form through which the VS distributed its publications) and statistics (the discourse through which the VS represented itself) lies not only in the fact that they both systematized vegetarianism in numbers, but also in the fact that, as I began to discuss in the previous chapter, they produced metonymic reading practices, which Goddu defines as the process of mapping out relations between parts and wholes, and between particulars and general principles (131, 141). In the case of print media, the serial structure of a journal sets texts in relation to each other in a numerical, sequential order, situating individual issues or parts within a larger series. Similarly, vital statistics, a new technology of government in the nineteenth century, encouraged people to see society as an aggregate, or as composed of constituent parts that made up a larger whole. The process of aggregation—which Maeve Adams defines as “the classification of individual people into homogenous groups (or aggregate wholes)” and “the framing of social problems in terms of parts and wholes” (Adams 103-4)—is central to Mary Poovey’s account of the social body. As Poovey argues, the image of the social body allowed “social analysts” to speak of the population as an “organic whole” while also diagnosing its offending parts, namely the poor: “[t]he phrase *social body* therefore promised full membership in a whole (and held out the image *of* that whole) to a part [the poor] identified as needing both discipline and care” (8).<sup>19</sup> However, as Adams points out in her essay on social realism, we do not tangibly experience our membership in a whole in everyday life. Her claim derives from Benedict Anderson who famously argues that larger entities such as nations or empires must be imagined: as Adams glosses, “their wholeness, that is, requires an abstract

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<sup>19</sup> Notably, “to aggregate,” from Latin, means “to cause to flock together” (*OED*), and thus Poovey’s aggregation bears a conceptual resemblance to Foucault’s pastoral power; both are powers of care and control over life.

conception of unity that is not concretely or immediately observable in the world of everyday life” (Adams 103). In *Imagined Communities*, Anderson identifies print media as one technology for the formation of imagined communities, though he also analyses statistical censuses (164). The census, along with maps and museums, created “a totalizing classificatory grid, which could be applied with endless flexibility to anything under the state’s real or contemplated control: peoples, regions, religions, languages, products, monuments, and so forth” (184). The “aggregative epistemology” (Adams 104) and “classificatory grid” (Anderson 184) of statistics brought parts of the social body into view for the purposes of, in Poovey’s words, “discipline and care” (8), while the use of numbers also objectified the larger whole of society. My point here is that this representational strategy was available not only to state governments and bureaucracies for diagnosing and classifying parts of the social body. Vegetarians deployed it to define and bring themselves into view and objectify their society, making it a tangible reality through numbers. Like the abstract entities of the nation, empire, or social body, the VS was not immediately visible in the everyday lives of its members. Members were dispersed across Britain; they did not always live with other vegetarians or attend lectures and meetings. The VS’s own classificatory grid, its statistical surveys of its members, allowed it primarily to gather information on its base, but the publication of these surveys on the covers of vegetarian journals also concretized the vegetarian social body in print; it encouraged readers to know and visualize this larger collective while at the same time recognizing themselves as a part of it. It provided a model by which individual vegetarians could see themselves as part of the larger vegetarian movement.

In the first part of this chapter, I situate the VS’s statistical self-fashioning within what scholars term the history of information (Ebster, 158; Weller 137; Nunberg 110-11) in order to better understand how the VS adopted this emerging discourse and its pastoral mechanisms to shape daily life and accrue cultural legitimacy. From there I analyse the *Vegetarian Messenger*, paying

attention to the publication of the statistics on its front cover. I conclude by looking at the use of information in the lectures of Henry Stephens Clubb, with whom I introduced part one of this dissertation.

### **The Weight of Numbers**

The VS's attempts to numerically represent itself participated in the "avalanche of printed numbers" that, according to Ian Hacking, cascaded across western Europe in the first half of the nineteenth century, a time when statistics came to permeate intellectual and cultural life (Hacking 67; Headrick 84). The enthusiasm for numbers derived from the "political arithmetic" of the eighteenth century, according to which "more meant better" (Cohen 53). In other words, the power of the state could be quantified in numbers: in the eighteenth century, western states began to enumerate their people and economies, largely for the purposes of taxation and military recruitment (Hacking 2, Cohen 35-55, Headrick 60-89). Statistical data measured material progress: the strength of a nation lay in its population size, trade volume, production levels, and heads of cattle—in anything that could be counted, categorized, and compared. Out of this quantifying impulse arose national censuses; administrators recognized that knowledge of the state was necessary for the practice of government (Cohen 35, Levitan 15; Joyce 20).

Official statistics in the eighteenth century remained state secrets: they were "for the eye of the king and his administrators" (Hacking 23; Joyce 24). In the nineteenth century, statistics became public and were oriented toward governance; the rise of statistical thinking framed public discourse, shaping how political actors made claims and sought to govern. Good government relied on facts, not opinions (Rose 218; Cohen 40). Proponents of statistics argued that the accumulation of information would bring unity to the process of government. Once the facts were known, disagreement would disappear and "the correct course of action would be clear" (Cohen 41). Hence, state governments on both sides of the Atlantic engaged in social



investigations, giving rise to what Oz Frankel terms “print statism” (2). With this statistical reasoning, the object of government shifted from guarding a territory to maintaining “the population,” with of all its “variables,” such as “birth and death rates, life expectancy, fertility, state of health, frequency of illness, patterns of diet and habitation” (Foucault, *History*, 25).

The census offers one principal example of public, printed numbers. The first census in Britain, conducted in 1801, was motivated by the bad harvests that afflicted the nation in the 1790s and gave rise to popular discontent (Thompson 347). A census of the nation’s population would, it was argued, allow the government to calculate the nation’s food needs and diffuse the possibility of revolution (Levitan 15; Cullen 12). Thus, food was closely bound up with statistics and the state in the nineteenth century, creating a literal (rather than figurative) relationship between feeding (or pastoring) and governing. The first three censuses in England—appearing decennially from 1801 onward—were limited in scope, primarily assessing the size of the population (Levitan 19; Joyce 20). The 1841 census, the most extensive account of the population ever completed (Headrick 87), was the first to be conducted under the newly formed Office of the Registrar-General and its head of statistics, Dr William Farr (Levitan 26-7). It expanded the number of occupational categories from three to twelve, giving “official shape” to what Adams terms the “emerging aggregative epistemologies” of the nineteenth century (109). This emphasis on occupations shaped how the VS organized its own internal surveys.

However, because public opinion largely opposed state intervention, much of the fact-gathering in England was carried out not by a centralized bureau, but by independent actors—physicians, industrialists, economists, social reformers, and local authorities (Levitan 24; Joyce 24; Desrosieres 168). Statistical analysis appealed to reformers who believed in rational social progress (Headrick 84). In September 1833, a small group of middleclass businessmen, among them James Kay, established the Manchester Statistical Society, while Thomas Malthus and others founded

the London Statistical Society the following year, giving rise to what Michael Cullen has termed the “Statistical Movement” in Britain (Cullen 77, 105; Levitan 22). The statistical societies of the 1830s concerned themselves with public health, sanitation, and education; they aligned themselves with *laissez-faire* economics (Cullen 106). Whereas eighteenth-century political arithmetic calculated the state’s power, nineteenth-century statistical societies attempted to make social problems visible, surveying the dwellings of the poor, or the rates of illiteracy, mortality, and illness. They aimed to diagnose diseased parts of the social body rather than enhance military recruitment.

Aileen Fyfe notes the importance of statistical information to social reform groups: in the nineteenth century, along with an increase in new media technologies for making information available, there developed a general “enthusiasm for collecting information,” particularly among “voluntary organisations and governmental departments [that] began collecting statistics about everything from crime and lunacy rates, to births and deaths, railway accidents, and conversions to Christianity” (569). According to Fyfe, the nineteenth century’s “information revolution” brought about not only an increase in the amount of information, but “a change in the nature of information being put into print” as well as a transformation in the position of printed information in society (569). Statistics provided the basis upon which reform groups could call for change. Social movements and pressure groups, such as temperance and statistical societies, publicized information (on literacy, education, population, illness, and drinking) in order to promote change and compel action from parliament (594).

The VS applied these techniques and the cultural authority of numbers to food and the body: its leaders genuinely believed that once they disseminated the facts others would happily convert to vegetarianism. The facts would bring an end to the irrationality of taste and demonstrate the universalism of the human diet, creating harmony on the question of what to eat. Despite the increasing demand for meat in the nineteenth century, the VS remained confident

that humans were rational agents who, when shown the figures on nutrition, would sacrifice their appetites and choose a humane diet. In a free, open debate, the better food would prevail, or so they assumed. The VS rather optimistically operated “on the assumption that others will adopt Vegetarian habits of diet, as we have done, from the time we can show them good reason for the change” (*V&A* Sept 1848, 23). At the first annual meeting of the VS in 1848, John Smith, the author of *Fruits and Farinacea*, claimed that “if man, as a rational being, but give this subject consideration—guided by the light science has thrown on it—he must come to the conclusion that vegetable food is best for him in all respects” (“Report” 13). Joseph Brotherton similarly proclaimed, “[a] rational being will ask himself what is best calculated to advance health? The laws of health are as true as the laws of mechanics” (“Report” 4). The founders of the VS believed that the underlying laws of health, diet, and anatomy could, through numbers, be made visible; vegetarians embraced what Poovey terms “the modern fact,” a numerical representation of the world that seemed independent of subjective interpretation (29).

However, their emphasis on numbers relied not only on communicating information to “man, as a rational being” (“Report,” 4), but also on constructing this rational, calculating subject. As Cohen argues, “the spread of numeracy” in the nineteenth century reflected “the extension of the commercial, or marketplace, frame of mind” (148). Nikolas Rose further argues that,

[n]umbers were bound up with a certain way of approaching the world. They conferred certainty, they contributed to knowledge, they revealed regularities, and they created regularities. And, in doing so, numbers could be thought of as fostering detachment from feeling, passions and tumult [...] Numeracy was an element in the ethical technologies that would, it was hoped, produce a certain kind of disciplined subject. (225)

The VS wanted to cultivate readers who would approach their everyday food through numbers rather than appetites, habits, or tradition. Doing so also entailed integrating vegetarianism within the values of the market that, Cohen, Rose, and Goddu argue, the rise of numbers signified.

Vegetarian periodicals taught readers about vegetarianism by incorporating it within middleclass

economic values, demonstrating how to rationalize food consumption. Vegetarians wanted to systematize eating, to fuse domestic arts with dietetic science. Readers counted themselves, adding up their abstinent years, but they were also taught to calculate their food, comparing ratios of fat, starch, and nitrogen (protein) as well as prices. In following the wider cultural shift toward the language of information, the VS worked not only to legitimate the vegetarian system, but also to cultivate in readers a “statistical consciousness” (Warner 31) or what Roland Barthes terms a “nutritional consciousness” (33). Their “nutritional rationalizing” (33) wanted to change readers’ relationship to food: it abstracted food from its material contexts and fragmented it into pieces of information (percentages of fat, nitrogen, and carbohydrates, relative costs), presenting it in tabular arrangements. It promised to create more efficient patterns of eating that would enable one to master a competitive, market society.

EP Thompson argues that struggles over food in the eighteenth century took place within what he terms “the old paternalist moral economy” (72), which entitled people to grain at set prices, unaffected by the fluctuations of the market. For instance, in response to food scarcity in the 1790s, rioting crowds would not steal food but instead enforce its sale at traditional prices, exhibiting a deep-seated belief in a moral pact between landowners and labourers, which Thompson calls the “bread nexus” (79); these popular actions in support of the bread-nexus represented “a last desperate effort by the people to reimpose the older moral economy as against the economy of the free market” (73). For Thompson, the conflict between traditionalism and the free market came to a head in the campaign to repeal the Corn Laws, which, while defeating the landowners’ hold on prices, also signaled the triumph of the market economy, or the cash nexus, over the bread nexus. Within the cash-nexus, popular struggle shifted to the issue of wages rather than bread; as Thompson argues, “class-conflict in nineteenth-century England found its characteristic expression in wages” (79).

Formed in 1847, the VS represented a form of collective action around food that differed significantly from the mobs of the eighteenth century. In contrast to the popular uprisings discussed by Thompson, the VS aimed not at the re-distribution of bread, but at the dissemination of information on food and diet, aligning itself with the ideology of useful knowledge. One could very easily interpret its informational strategies as an adaptation to the free market. For instance, in a lecture published in the *Vegetarian Messenger* (to which I return below), Henry Clubb calculated before his audience that one pence worth of bread contained as much nourishment as a shilling worth of butcher's meat, and thus a vegetarian diet would allow the working classes to make more efficient use of their wages. Similarly, in a series of articles, which applied the benefits of vegetarianism to the different classes of society, the *Vegetarian Advocate* explained that a vegetarian diet could save an agricultural labourer "4s. per week" or "£10 8s. per year," savings which he could put toward the rent of an acre of land, allowing the him to support his family in comfort, and gradually raise himself up to the position of a freeholder (Sept 1849, 15). Thus, whereas Thompson's rural mob took their grievances directly to merchants, defending their traditional way of life, the *Vegetarian Advocate* inculcated the values of individualism and self-reliance. As the *Advocate* told readers, "if you wish to improve the condition of yourselves and families, look not to your master, or to the government but look to yourselves" (Sept 1849, 15). The VS presented its diet as a strategy to survive in the cash nexus, where the moral economy no longer mediated between masters and labourers.

This language of self-management instructed readers in the marketplace, teaching them to rationalize diet; however, tactically and rhetorically, it also helped fit vegetarianism within the values of domestic ideology *and* nineteenth-century social reform, which relied on the authority of facts. The VS, addressing itself to a social world permeated by statistical thinking, needed to present its relevance to economic interests, and make its diet legible within factual discourse. Its

aim was to position food choice as central to self-government; it promised to give one control over one's health and body, and over one's economic position. For instance, the *Advocate* further explained vegetarianism to the working classes by comparing it to the way “you learned your trade” (Sept 1849, 15), enjoining mechanics to direct their technical ingenuity “to the management of that still more wonderful machine—the human body” (15). In industrial Manchester, vegetarianism was framed as a technology of the body, the skilled management of which would ensure health, domestic comfort, and independence.

As a novel and unproven way of living, modern vegetarianism could not rest on convention or inherited habits: hence the constant need to construct its own history, citing Pythagoras and other forbearers; and hence too the strategy of founding vegetarianism on facts rather than on culinary traditions. Vegetarianism itself had little authority or history that it could draw on in the mid-nineteenth century; instead, the movement framed the decision not to eat meat as a modern innovation, a rejection of unthinking custom in favour of science, reason, and humanity. Conversion required, according to advocates, setting aside personal preferences and looking at the facts. To take an example from Henry Clubb, he opened his lecture on the “Vegetarian Principle,” which was printed in the *Vegetarian Messenger*, by presenting it as an objective inquiry: “To investigate the present subject with success, we should endeavour to raise our minds to a free and independent state with regard to the customs and conventionalities of the world. Our object is truth” (*VM* Sept 1849, 17). The rituals of cooking and eating are laden with personal and cultural values, or “customs and conventionalities” (17). Taste is subjective and debatable. Statistics and other forms of fact allowed the VS to represent its unconventional diet in the seemingly value-free, transparent, and authoritative language of numbers, creating a rational dietetics that, it claimed, transcended custom, taste, and personal preference.

Thus, like other reform societies, the VS reflected the trend for gathering statistical information for reformist purposes. At a time when the state was beginning to use statistics to visualize its population, and when statistical societies were investigating the lives of the urban poor, the VS too deployed the discourse of statistics and demography to represent itself and consolidate itself as a counter-public. It also shared with the statistical societies a belief in rational progress and *laissez-faire* ideology. However, it is important to note that where the state and social reformers collected statistics on *others* (on the poor or the sick), vegetarians gathered information on *themselves*, shaping their lives into embodied arguments. Vegetarians made use of statistical information to effect the transformation of society and the transformation of themselves—their health, bodies, and subjectivities. It was by transforming themselves into vegetarians that they hoped to transform the rest of society. This emphasis on self-exemplification was what distinguished the Vegetarian Society of Manchester from, say, the Manchester Statistical Society; more specifically, it distinguished the vegetarian from the statistician. Seeing a statistician working day-by-day without losing energy would not lend more credence to statistics; the credibility of statistics did not rest on the life of the statistician. Vegetarianism, by contrast, rested on the lives of its practitioners: they were their own evidence. Vegetarians believed that by living as a vegetarian, by eating porridge and fruit, one could represent the diet and further the aims of the VS. As we will see in the following section, they made use of statistical representation to shape themselves and their everyday lives into an argument.

### ***The Vegetarian Messenger, No 1. Vol. 1***

For the brief period they co-existed, the *Vegetarian Advocate*, and its successor, the *Vegetarian Messenger* (which continues to this day as a quarterly, *The Vegetarian*), tried to solve the question of audience—the question of whether to address outsiders or insiders—by developing a division of labour, which the *Vegetarian Messenger* explained to readers in its first issue:

whilst the *Vegetarian Advocate* remains the medium of information, more particularly interesting to Vegetarians, such as condensed accounts of meetings and the transactions of the Vegetarian Society, the *Vegetarian Messenger* will be adapted to, and largely distributed among, the members of various religious and philanthropic societies, and those friends to whom Vegetarians may desire to impart a knowledge of their system. (*VM*, Sept 1849, 1)

The *Vegetarian Advocate* orchestrated the day-to-day operations of the vegetarian movement; its pages provided reports of soirees and parties in London and Manchester, revealing a lively mid-century vegetarian culture. Such reports on the group's inner workings would, of course, interest only the converted. In contrast to the internally oriented *Advocate*, the *Vegetarian Messenger* represented itself a "pioneer," bringing vegetarianism to new audiences; it was "intended as a medium of information between Vegetarians and their friends who are not yet convinced of the truth of their principles" (*VA*, Sept 1849, 1). Both periodicals described themselves as media of information for distinct audiences, insiders and outsiders, but neither periodical functioned simply by conveying discrete information from one point to another. Rather, the organization of information in vegetarian media was integral to the meaning and construction of a vegetarian identity. Its periodicals used the diffusion of information to construct the "we" of the vegetarian community; that is, their communication of information was not supplementary to the objectives of the movement—or a means toward the goal of food reform—but helped call the category of vegetarianism into being. The VS made use of statistical information to discipline the bodies of individual members *and* consolidate itself as a corporate body.

The introduction to the first issue of the *Vegetarian Messenger*, September 1849, embraced the journal's role as a medium of information, representing it as a product of its historical moment, which scholars refer to as the nineteenth century's "information revolution" (Fyfe 567, Headrick 532). The editors of the journal attributed the development of a "vegetarian movement"



not so much to the excellence of vegetarianism *per se*, but to the Victorian age's expanded channels for communicating to a mass public:

One of the most promising features of this eventful and hopeful period of the world, is its diffusive character and tendency. Principles which in the past have been discovered by the few who have dared to dive into the cause of things, who have studied human nature in themselves, and have been bold enough to declare the results of their investigations with but little chance or hope of immediate approval or adoption; principles which have been cherished by the philosopher in his solitude, the poet in his reverie of ecstatic contemplation of a "Golden Age," either of the past or future; principles which have warmed the heart and lighted the eye of devoted philanthropists, who have desired their universal dissemination, but without the means of fulfilling that desire; principles which have been thus loved and practiced by a certain portion of the world, are now being disseminated among all classes, and meeting with responsive feelings in the hearts and consciences of millions of the human race. The principles of Temperance, Peace, and Universal Christian Charity, are pleasing instances of this interesting phenomenon. In this position do we find the VEGETARIAN PRINCIPLE. (Sept 1849, 1)

The world of 1849, according to the *Vegetarian Messenger*, was characterized by diffusion and communication. The "VEGETARIAN PRINCIPLE" (1), the editors commented, had long been practiced under "various names and forms at different periods of the world" (1), but "the period seems at length to have arrived for its more extensive dissemination" (1). In other words, vegetarianism was old and new, an ancient practice modernized for the nineteenth century. What was once personal—the feelings of the heart, poetic reverie, quiet contemplation, idiosyncratic eating habits—now had "the means" to reach an audience composed of "millions of the human race" (1). The time was ripe for "universal dissemination" (1), and the periodical press was to be instrumental in realizing this epochal transmission of vegetarianism: "the principle of diffusion is now to be brought to bear upon it [vegetarianism], and it is with the hope of humbly assisting to accomplish this, that we have ventured the first number of the *Vegetarian Messenger*" (1). Long known to solitary individuals, the "vegetarian principle" was now, with the publication of the *Vegetarian Messenger*, in the process of being "disseminated among all classes" (1).

From the title page of the first issue of the *Vegetarian Messenger* (figure 2.1), we can glean the tactics and internal hierarchies of the VS, and the way it made use of information both to

represent vegetarianism to outsiders and reaffirm the commitment of members. A basic newsheet, the journal was saturated with information: it advertised the VS's meetings, lecture tours, and publications; it published essays explaining vegetarian doctrines and principles to the uninitiated; and it contained recipes with precise instructions and measurements for the practice of vegetarianism. If we glance across the first cover, we encounter, printed in the largest type at the masthead, the title of the publication, the *Vegetarian Messenger*. Drawing on the terminology of James Mussell, we can say that the title refers at once to the particular, material issue that we hold in our hands (issue one), and to the publication's abstract identity that links the series of issues together (the *Vegetarian Messenger* as an institution that transcends the individual issue). Directly below the title we find the details of its production and consumption: the issue and volume number in the series, No. 1 of Vol. 1; the price, 1d. or 2d stamped for delivery; the place and date of publication, Manchester, September 1, 1849. These details situate the periodical in a specific moment in time, determining its date-stamped existence. In contrast to this monthly periodicity stands name the VS itself, appearing below the date of publication and in a central position on the page. Its different font (hollow or outlined type in contrast to the solid black of the title) suggests that the society and its journal mirror each other; they are distinct yet complementary entities. Notably, we learn that the VS was "Established A.D. 1847," a fact which situates it outside of periodical time and within a different temporal framework: that of linear history. Whereas the periodical is an ephemeral "date-stamped commodity" (Beetham 21), the VS is represented as a permanent institution. It has a start date (1847 A.D.), but not an expiry date: while the contents of the journal change each month, the name of the VS remains the same, appearing on front cover of each passing issue. The purpose of foregrounding the VS's date of establishment, internal structure, leadership, and objectives on the title page seems clear enough: as vegetarianism's

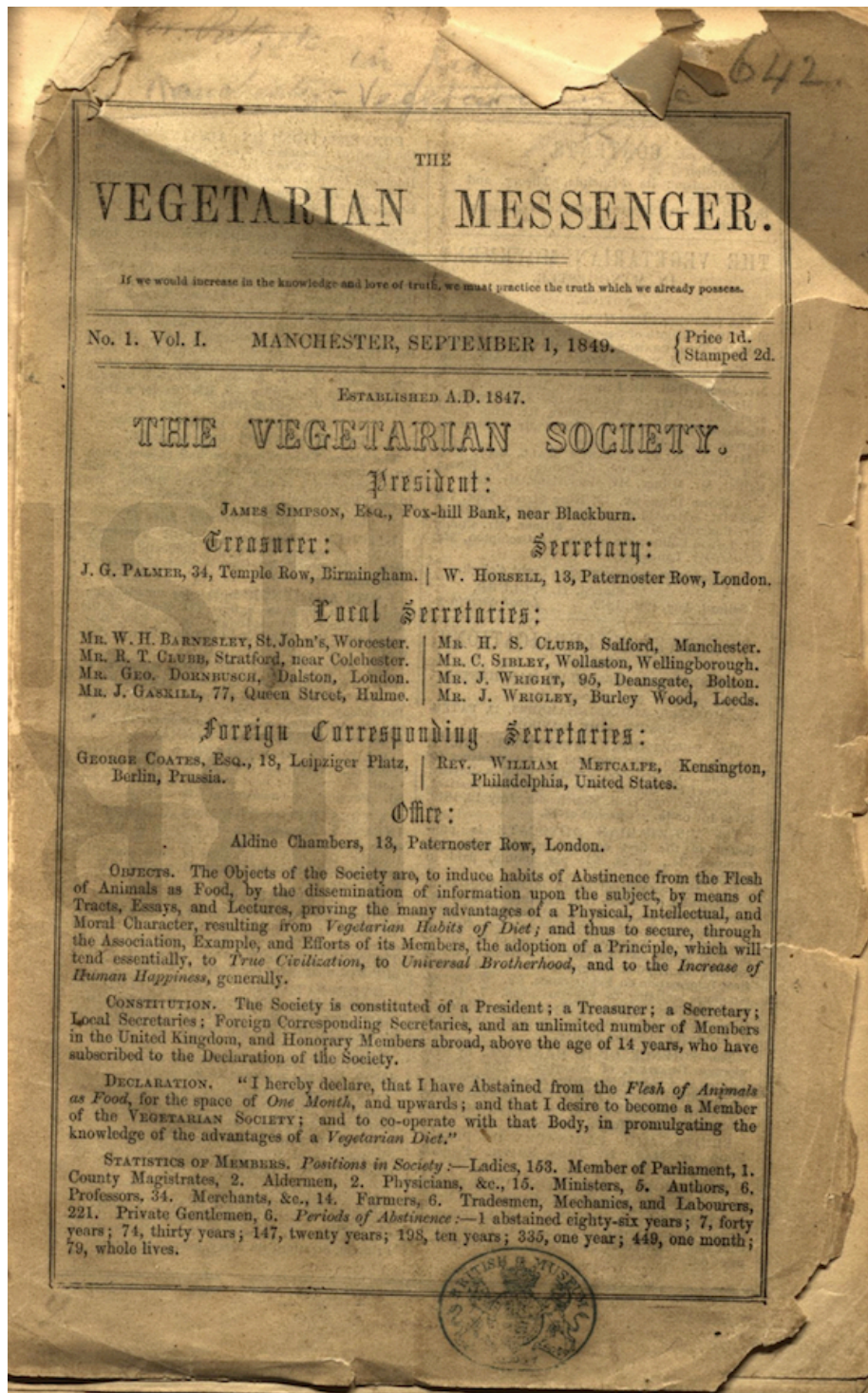


Figure 2.1: *Vegetarian Messenger*, September 1849. The front cover lists publication information as well as the VS's Objectives, Constitution, Declaration and Statistics. *British Library*.

ambassador to the world, the *Vegetarian Messenger's* role was to explain the VS's aims before the public. But, rather than simply advertise the society to outsiders, the cover also seems to have carried an internal message to existing members. Through the force of repetition, subscribers were reminded each month of the objectives of the VS—"to induce habits of Abstinence from the Flesh of Animals as Food"—and, importantly, of their "DECLARATION" to join the society and support its objectives. Hence, through repetition, the cover of each issue served to develop readers' familiarity with the VS's identity, and to reaffirm readers' commitment to the cause. The first thing readers encountered each month were the officers of the VS (the president, treasurer, secretary, local agents, and foreign correspondents) and, indeed, themselves, the general members of the society who were represented anonymously in the "statistics of membership" at the bottom of the page, which listed their professions, years of abstinence, and gender. In this way, the journal constructed and represented the membership of the VS as a corporate entity, unified through a shared declaration, formal constitution, and statistical census.

The VS's attempts to market its publications in different formats and at different prices appear to have resulted in the removal of this paratextual material in bound volume editions. For instance, members of the VS received the journal on a monthly basis, but one could also buy an entire year of issues bound together in a single volume. Recently, Brigham University has digitalized the first seven volumes of the *Vegetarian Messenger*, and contemporary readers can now view them online through the *Internet Archive* (archive.org). These volume editions begin with a table of contents and an index, tools which make it much easier to sift through articles by subject and title; however, the process of indexing and binding has removed the original covers along with the advertising pages and divisions between the issues. As a result, the volumes read more like a book than a series of periodicals (Beetham 96). Twenty-first century readers may now scroll through the content of the journals—their articles on vegetarian principles and practice, their

annual reports and supplements—but they cannot appreciate how these materials were first presented. To gain a sense of the journal’s materiality, one must visit the British Library or the archives of the VS, which have preserved at least some of the journals’ advertising and casings.

What we lose when distinct issues are bound together as a continuous volume is a sense of the periodical’s serialization—more specifically, we lose the ability to appreciate the importance of the periodical in building the vegetarian movement and community. For instance, without the front and inside cover of the September 1849 issue (figures 2.1 and 2.2), we would not see the VS’s statistical self-documentation, nor would we learn of the public meetings and lectures that were scheduled to take place throughout Manchester for the month of September. Nor, furthermore, would we read of the advertisements for other vegetarian publications: in addition to the *Vegetarian Advocate* and *Vegetarian Messenger*, the VS published reprints of works by Sylvester Graham (*The Science of Human Life*) and John Smith (*Fruits and Farinacea: The Proper Food of Man*); treatises on diet (*The Products of the Vegetable Kingdom*, *Conversations on Abstinence*, *Recipes of a Vegetarian Diet*); and a series of vegetarian tracts and pamphlets. The ephemeral and marginal advertisements for these texts provide us with an impression of the day-to-day workings of the vegetarian movement, and they reveal to us how the *Vegetarian Messenger* situated itself within a wider network of print. When we read the *Vegetarian Messenger* alongside its paratextual advertising we see that what was being offered and advocated in the journal was not only a doctrine of flesh-abstinence, but an inter-textual, self-referential system of texts on household management, health, sanitation, temperance, dietetics, hydropathy, physiology, and other subjects. The *Vegetarian Messenger* aimed, each month, to present condensed statements on vegetarian principles, collecting information on diet for readers from diverse sources, but it also produced what Teresa Goddu terms a diffusive, “centrifugal force” (143), orienting the gaze of readers outward to other volumes and texts. The *Vegetarian Messenger* was a text selling other texts, not only through its

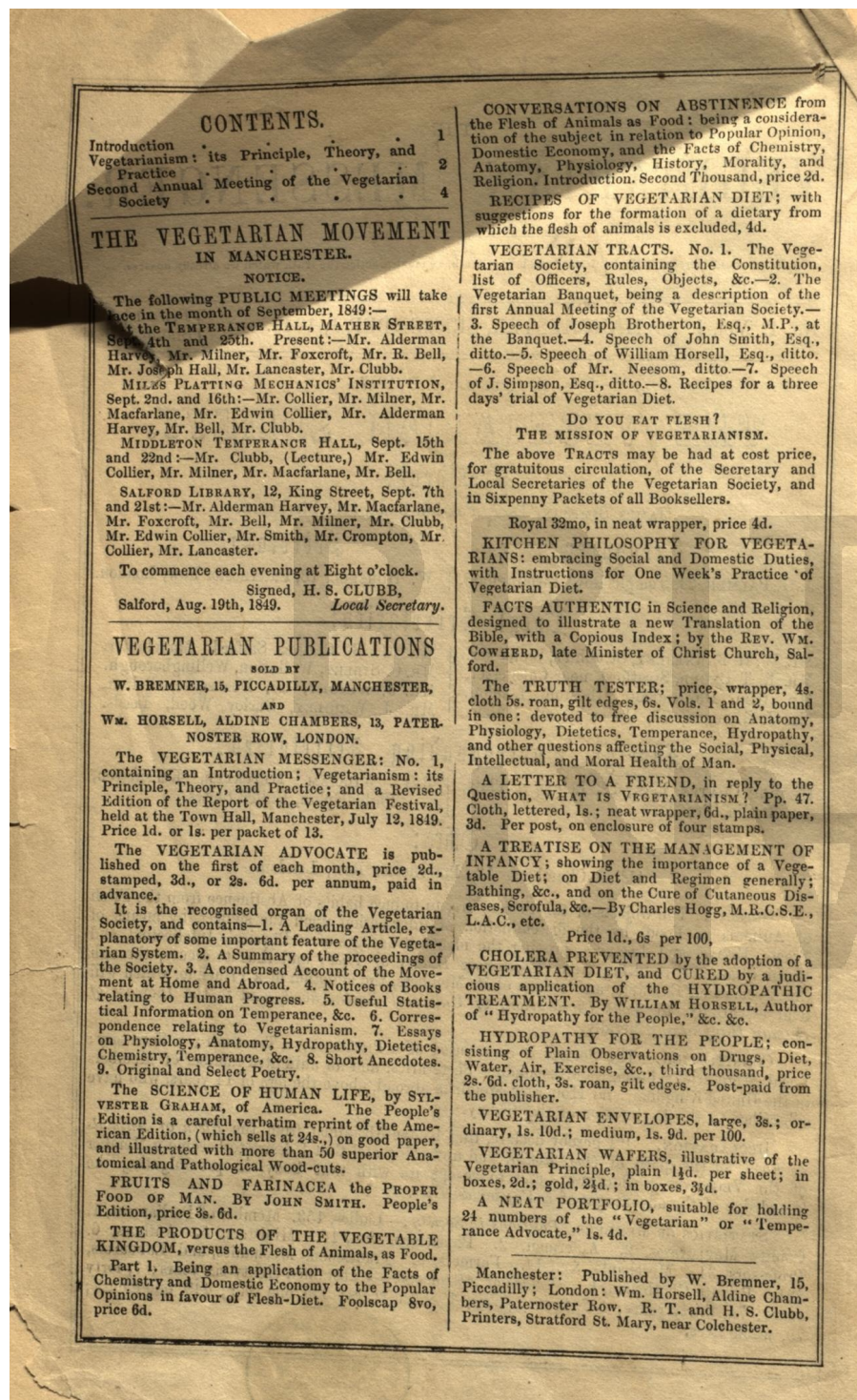


Figure 2.2: Inside cover of the *Vegetarian Messenger*, September 1849. It advertises Public Meetings and Lectures as well as Vegetarian Publications. *British Library*.

advertisements but also through embedded references to other works in its essays and commentaries; for instance, the first issue directed readers to a method of bread baking on page two hundred and twenty-nine of Graham's *Science of Human Life*, and further referred readers to the *Recipes of Vegetarian Diet* for the preparation of nutritious soups. In this way, the VS adopted the strategies of commercial publishing: to practice the complete Vegetarian System one would need to collect the complete set of vegetarian texts. Readers in turn were solicited in the distribution of these parallel texts: the Vegetarian Tracts (Nos. 1 through 8) were, we learn, available from local secretaries for "gratuitous circulation" (figure 2.2) to be shared with friends or left on tables at mechanics' institutes or temperance halls, while the advertisements for vegetarian envelopes and wafers shed some light on how individual readers made use of the postal system and correspondence to disseminate subtle vegetarian messages on stationary and letter seals.

As I suggested in the previous chapter on the *Vegetarian Advocate*, the VS's organization of its publications into serial numbers (figure 2.3) mirrored the way in which it counted its members and tallied up their years of abstinence. The open-ended serialization of texts, in which there would always be a new number, created a model of cumulative growth for adding up more and more abstinent years. Subscribing members were encouraged to document themselves, to record their practice of abstinence: new recruits began with month 1, month 2, month 3, and so on until they reached year 1, year 2, year 3 (figure 2.4). Where the *Vegetarian Advocate* published these membership statistics in annual reports, the *Vegetarian Messenger* displayed the "Statistics of Membership" on its front covers. This information constitutes one of the more interesting tactics of the VS to shape the conduct of its members. From this data we learn of the society's membership: in 1850 it contained 478 members, 158 of whom were female and 320 of whom were male (see figure 2.4). The men were additionally divided up into professions, in categories ranging from members of parliament, country magistrates, physicians, and ministers, to

tradesmen, mechanics and labourers. The journal wanted to prove that a broad range of employments, from physical to intellectual labour, could be sustained on a vegetarian diet. It similarly wanted to demonstrate that the society encompassed all levels of practitioners, from the beginner to the experienced. Some had abstained only for one month, while others had abstained for their whole lives. This survey of vegetarians was at once individualizing and collectivizing: it identified members individually, counting each one and situating each within the emerging categories of national censuses (profession, age, gender), while it also represented vegetarians as a collective whole, implying a slight leveling effect. Everyone, from the ladies and labourers to the MPs and Magistrates, counted; that is, everyone in the vegetarian census contributed to the vegetarian movement, added to its collective body of evidence. This documentation in turn invested subscribers of the journal in the movement and fused their private, domestic activity with a collective project; simply by remaining abstinent members could see themselves as contributing to the larger movement, bolstering the evidence in favour of the vegetarian diet. Published on the front of the journal, these numbers created a direct connection between the text and those reading it. The slow passage of one's life was reflected and quantified in the journal; its monthly publication paralleled and supported readers in their accumulation of month upon month of abstinence, uniting the material forms through which information on vegetarianism was distributed with the techniques through which the VS sought to conduct the lives of its members.

Hacking, an historian of statistics, has argued that the statistical enumeration of the population brought with it an "unintended side effect": it created new categories for individuals to fit themselves within, or, as Hacking puts it, "[e]numeration demands *kinds* of things or people to count. Counting is hungry for categories" (66-7). According to Hacking, many of the categories we now use to describe people, particularly occupational classifications, resulted from the needs



VEGETARIAN TRACTS. No. 1. The Vegetarian Society, containing the Constitution, list of Officers, Rules, Objects, &c.—2. The Vegetarian Banquet, being a description of the first Annual Meeting of the Vegetarian Society.—3. Speech of Joseph Brotherton, Esq., M.P., at the Banquet.—4. Speech of John Smith, Esq., ditto.—5. Speech of William Horsell, Esq., ditto.—6. Speech of Mr. Neesom, ditto.—7. Speech of J. Simpson, Esq., ditto.—8. Recipes for a three days' trial of Vegetarian Diet.

DO YOU EAT FLESH?  
THE MISSION OF VEGETARIANISM.

The above TRACTS may be had at cost price, for gratuitous circulation, of the Secretary and Local Secretaries of the Vegetarian Society, and in Sixpenny Packets of all Booksellers.

HYDROPATHY FOR THE PEOPLE; consisting of Plain Observations on Drugs, Diet, Water, Air, Exercise, &c., third thousand, price 2s. 6d. cloth, 3s. roan, gilt edges. Post-paid from the publisher.

VEGETARIAN ENVELOPES, large, 3s.; ordinary, 1s. 10d.; medium, 1s. 9d. per 100.

VEGETARIAN WAFERS, illustrative of the Vegetarian Principle, plain 1½d. per sheet; in boxes, 2d.; gold, 2½d.; in boxes, 3½d.

A NEAT PORTFOLIO, suitable for holding 24 numbers of the "Vegetarian" or "Temperance Advocate," 1s. 4d.

Figure 2.3: Advertisements for Vegetarian Tracts, Vegetarian Envelopes, and Vegetarian Wafers, inside cover, *Vegetarian Messenger*, September 1849. *British Library*

OBJECTS. The Objects of the Society are, to induce habits of Abstinence from the Flesh of Animals as Food, by the dissemination of information upon the subject, by means of Tracts, Essays, and Lectures, proving the many advantages of a Physical, Intellectual, and Moral Character, resulting from *Vegetarian Habits of Diet*; and thus to secure, through the Association, Example, and Efforts of its Members, the adoption of a Principle, which will tend essentially, to *True Civilization*, to *Universal Brotherhood*, and to the *Increase of Human Happiness*, generally.

CONSTITUTION. The Society is constituted of a President; a Treasurer; a Secretary; Local Secretaries; Foreign Corresponding Secretaries, and an unlimited number of Members in the United Kingdom, and Honorary Members abroad, above the age of 14 years, who have subscribed to the Declaration of the Society.

DECLARATION. "I hereby declare, that I have Abstained from the *Flesh of Animals as Food*, for *One Month*, and upwards; and that I desire to become a Member of the VEGETARIAN SOCIETY; and to co-operate with that Body, in promulgating the knowledge of the advantages of a *Vegetarian Diet*."

STATISTICS OF MEMBERS. *Positions in Society*: Member of Parliament, 1; County Magistrates, 2; Alderman, 1; Physicians, Surgeons, &c., 16; Ministers, 5; Authors, 7; Professional Men, 43; Merchants, 15; Farmers, 6; Private Gentlemen, 6; Tradesmen, Mechanics, and Labourers, 245; Females, 158; Males, 320; Total, 478. *Periods of Abstinence*: One Month, 478; One Year, 342; Ten Years, 199; Twenty Years, 147; Thirty Years, 74; Forty Years, 7; Eighty-six Years, 1; Whole Lives, 79.

Figure 2.4: Objects, Constitution, Declaration, and Statistics of Members, front cover of the *Vegetarian Messenger*, Jan 1850. *British Library*.

of enumeration; he even suggests, somewhat facetiously, that the development of class-consciousness owes more to the authors of the first censuses than Karl Marx (66). Levitan similarly address the role of statistics, and the census in particular, in producing new categories of individuals at the expense of local communities: “[b]y deemphasizing geographic communities, the census essentially defined the nation as the primary locus of identification and analysis, and weighted each individual within that nation equally and anonymously” (Levitan 29). For Hacking and other historians, this process of individuation makes up part of the history of governmentality: statistical analysis created new categories in order to know, and by implication, control the population. As I have suggested, the statistics of the VS’s membership reflected the categorizations used by modern censuses (profession, gender, and age), but it also used the categorizing impulse of enumeration to carve out and make legible its own social identity: the vegetarian. In this way, the VS embraced the biopolitical techniques of the nineteenth century, but used them for its own ends. While the national census did not identify individuals by their diets, the VS applied the classifying logic of statistics to define its new dietary category. Statistics allowed the VS to represent itself as an aggregate (made up of men and woman, labourers and gentlemen, ect.), encouraging individual readers see themselves as both distinct individuals and as the constituent parts that made up the whole.

The statistics on the cover of the *Vegetarian Messenger* demonstrate how the VS appropriated the tools of national formation (the census and statistics) to materialize itself as social identity and, indeed, to construct the very category of the vegetarian. The publication of statistics on the journal’s cover captures the crucial role played by print media within the society to shape its mode of life. Vegetarians made use of print to form themselves, collectively, into a corporate body and, individually, into symbols, or living examples, of their movement. This self-documentation and self-quantification did not simply record the lives of members, but also gave

them shape. Keeping a record of past abstinence inspired future abstinence and organized the society around a collective goal. Repetition (of claims, arguments, tactics) was a central feature of the vegetarian movement, and the ostensible purpose of repeating these statistics across different genres (in lectures, reports, and on the front cover of the journal) was to demonstrate to the world that a vegetarian diet could support health and life; here were 478 individuals of varying occupations, ages, and experiences living as vegetarians. But, as I am suggesting, the VS's statistics also served to frame and give form to the lives of individuals. Just as the VS organized its texts in serial numbers, it also used numeracy to categorize and represent its members. Recording each member's years of abstinence integrated them into the society: it transformed individual domestic action (cooking and eating) into a collective project in which each member participated simply by remaining abstinent from flesh. It made past advances quantifiable, while also orienting participants toward the future, building year upon year of abstinence. The documentation of their health, lives and years of abstinence invested members in the society's history, in its shared activity, and in its incremental progress. In turn, the society became invested in the bodies of its members, in the lives of those who stood as its primary piece of evidence and justification.

### **Henry Clubb in the *Vegetarian Messenger***

Henry Clubb lectured prolifically on vegetarianism, deploying its statistics and tables in his arguments. In its second and third issues, December 1849 and January 1850, the *Vegetarian Messenger* published two complementary addresses by Clubb, both of which were titled the "Vegetarian Principle." The first dealt with the history and physiology of vegetarianism, the second with its moral, intellectual, and economic advantages. These lectures, versions of which Clubb delivered throughout Manchester, set out to define vegetarianism for readers of the new journal. For our purposes, they bring together many of the themes I have addressed so far: pastoral power and biopolitics; the use of printed numbers to represent vegetarians individually

and collectively; and the use of information to compel changes in the lives of others. Like many mid-century vegetarians, Clubb articulated a pastoral, conversionist belief that individuals needed to change their lives: as he argued, “there must be a thorough reformation in the character of man, before justice, peace, good-will, piety and health, can be universally established on earth” (*VM*, Dec. 1849, 17). Clubb situated vegetarianism within a narrative of progress that included other movements for the reformation of “man” (such as temperance, peace, abolitionism, and sanitary reform), but he argued that vegetarianism “strikes at the root more deeply, takes a wider grasp of the evils of society, than do these excellent institutions” (17) because it promised the complete physiological transformation of the individual. It promised to build better bodies and better humans, and, consequently, a better nation: as Clubb argued in another lecture, “[i]ndividuals made nations, and if men became better individually, and socially, it followed, that national elevation must be the result” (*VM: Vol. 1*, 1849, 98). Clubb and the VS wanted to appropriate eating as a site for subjection, or for the making of good subjects.

In his lectures, Clubb drew from anatomy and chemistry to prove, firstly, that animal and plant foods contained the same basic nutrients, a revelation that, he claimed, demystified the value placed on meat; secondly, that the human body, from its teeth to its digestive tract, was designed for a vegetable diet; and, thirdly, that one could more economically build up the body from beans than beef. Whereas farmers analysed the fattening of cattle, vegetarians used the same logic to assess the best method of feeding the human body. In his lectures, Clubb advocated cultivating humans rather than fattening animals, an argument he based first in political economy before appealing to humaneness. Clubb castigated the wider system of food production—which he termed “this flesh-eating, blood-spilling system” (Jan 1850, 27)—because it resulted in starvation for some and over-indulgence for others. To restore balance and eliminate hunger, he contended that humans, not cattle, should become the object of pastoral care:

Can we wonder that famine should sometimes visit our shores, whilst we continue so enormously to misappropriate the resources placed at our disposal? Can we wonder that thousands of our fellow creatures are in a state of privation and want, whilst we continue to feed and fatten, with the produce of the soil, the lower animals instead of feeding men, women, and children? [...] When we know that the costs of unnaturally multiplying and keeping so many millions of animals, would be sufficient to keep in comfort and respectability, at least an equal number of human beings; whilst there is nothing obtained from the animal, which cannot be obtained far better, and in greater abundance, from the vegetable kingdom; these, added to the facts already stated, seem to show most clearly, that *it would be far better to leave the animals to their own happy freedom, and turn our attention to the cultivation and improvement of human beings* (Jan 1850, 30-31, my emphasis).

For Foucault, turning “pastoral power” toward the cultivation of “human beings” is a metaphoric turn, a *trope* he uses to describe the “art of governing men” (*Security* 165). Clubb put Foucault’s pastoral metaphor into literal practice, advocating a redirection of the modern techniques for multiplying animals toward the cultivation of human beings. He enjoined a simple substitution, a substitution of human bodies for animal bodies within the mechanisms of pastoral care and control. As I have argued, the VS took the pastoral metaphor, the metaphor of a shepherd who guides his flock to its pasture, quite literally. Its ultimate objective was to induce habits of abstinence from flesh, to lead the nation toward safer, better, and more abundant food. Proper feeding was, for vegetarians, not a metaphor for governing a population, but the essential to the “art of governing” (165). Emerging from the hungry forties, the VS saw itself as a shepherd to guide the population toward its natural diet, while it also saw a natural diet as the means toward cultivating a healthier, better population.

Adopting the position of the shepherd, Clubb’s rhetoric was often religious—he cited the dietary decrees of Genesis, which, to his mind, proved that humans were created as vegetarians (18-19)—but, in order to guide the flock toward vegetarianism, his lectures also deployed Linnaean classification, numerical tables, statistics, the economic logic of the market, and the biopolitical view of “man” as an animal among other animals—that is, as a species whose

mortality and birth rates, health and environment, wealth and productivity, could all be studied, quantified, and improved (Foucault 139-45). Lacking the authority of the state or landowning farmers, Clubb and the VS embraced the authoritative discourse of science and numbers to classify “man” as a vegetable eater. One could debate tastes in food, but one could not debate transparent facts, or so Clubb implied. Indeed, Clubb framed the debate over diet as one between fact-driven social reform and the inertia of custom. He began his first lecture not by advocating vegetarianism, but by inquiring into humanity’s original diet; he asked his audience to take the point of view “that that food is best which contributes most to the physical, intellectual, and moral health, regardless of custom or prevailing inclination” (Dec 1848, 18). This view of food required that he and his audience first study “man as a physical being” (18), examining the “structure of the human body” (19) and the effects of vegetarianism on “health, strength, and longevity” (18). The vegetarian argument reflected emerging zoological discourses which studied “man” by classifying him in relation to other animals, or, that is, by studying him as a species. Naturalists identified “the food natural to animals by the structure of their teeth and alimentary organs” (19), and Clubb took the same approach to discover “the natural food of man” (20):

The lateral motion of the lower jaw of man, as in herbivorous animals, shows an adaptability to the grinding process which is necessary for grain, pulse, and vegetables, but which the jaws of carnivorous animals will not admit of. The other alimentary organs, the stomach and alimentary canal, are in perfect accord with man’s teeth, adapted to a vegetable diet. The colon, like that of herbivorous animals, is large and deeply cellulated, whilst that of carnivorous animals is uniformly smooth. (21)

In turning to the evidence of anatomy, vegetarians, such as John Smith, made the somewhat startling claim that “man must in strict propriety be considered an extinct species” (Smith 56-7). The habits and appetites of “man” had become so corrupted and artificial that one could not study contemporary practices to determine humanity’s natural dietary needs. Instead, one had to go beneath the veneer of civilization and examine anatomy as though it were the fossilized

remains of a lost species. In his lecture, Clubb argued that the physical evidence of the body conclusively demonstrated that “flesh-eating is contrary to man’s true nature; that it is a habit which mans has acquired, not a nature which has been created” (19). Vegetarians read the body as a palimpsest, the original script having been overwritten by years of civilization.

Clubb thus circumnavigated the sway of contemporary tastes, cuisine, and culture by adopting scientific taxonomy to classify “man” among the apes; he supplemented this argument not only with passages from respected naturalists (Linnaeus, Gassendi, Cuvier, and others), but also with a diagram that displayed the human colon and jaw alongside the jaws of a panther, camel, and orang-utan (figure 2.5). The visual comparison among teeth and jaws made Clubb’s larger point: that humans belonged in category of vegetable-eaters, or as Clubb put it, “the human constitution was best adapted to subsist on the direct productions of the soil” (21). The argument was simple: to discover “the natural food of man,” one ought to study his bowels, not his habits, his nature, not his culture. Bible Christian vegetarians such as Clubb professed a dietary radicalism, a return to roots, origins, and natural laws.<sup>20</sup> Much the way they privileged the primary text of the Bible, they enjoined a return to humanity’s original diet. Behind their classification of humans as vegetable-eaters lay the assumption that “man” had a “natural” food, a perfect and pre-determined diet that was intended for all humans and that would restore them to their prelapsarian state. The vegetarians wanted to remake social relations from their foundations: from human origins, from the anatomy of the body, and from a rationalist reinterpretation of daily sustenance. They based their platform for reform on the length and shape of the digestive tract.

To prove that vegetarianism was an underlying natural law, Clubb appealed to the authority of numbers to first prove the opposite: that flesh-eating was an unnatural aberration. As Desrosieres argues, statistics do not necessarily reveal an objective world, but enact a “process of

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<sup>20</sup> As Craig Calhoun notes, the word *radical* signifies “roots—of plants, words, or numbers” (12).

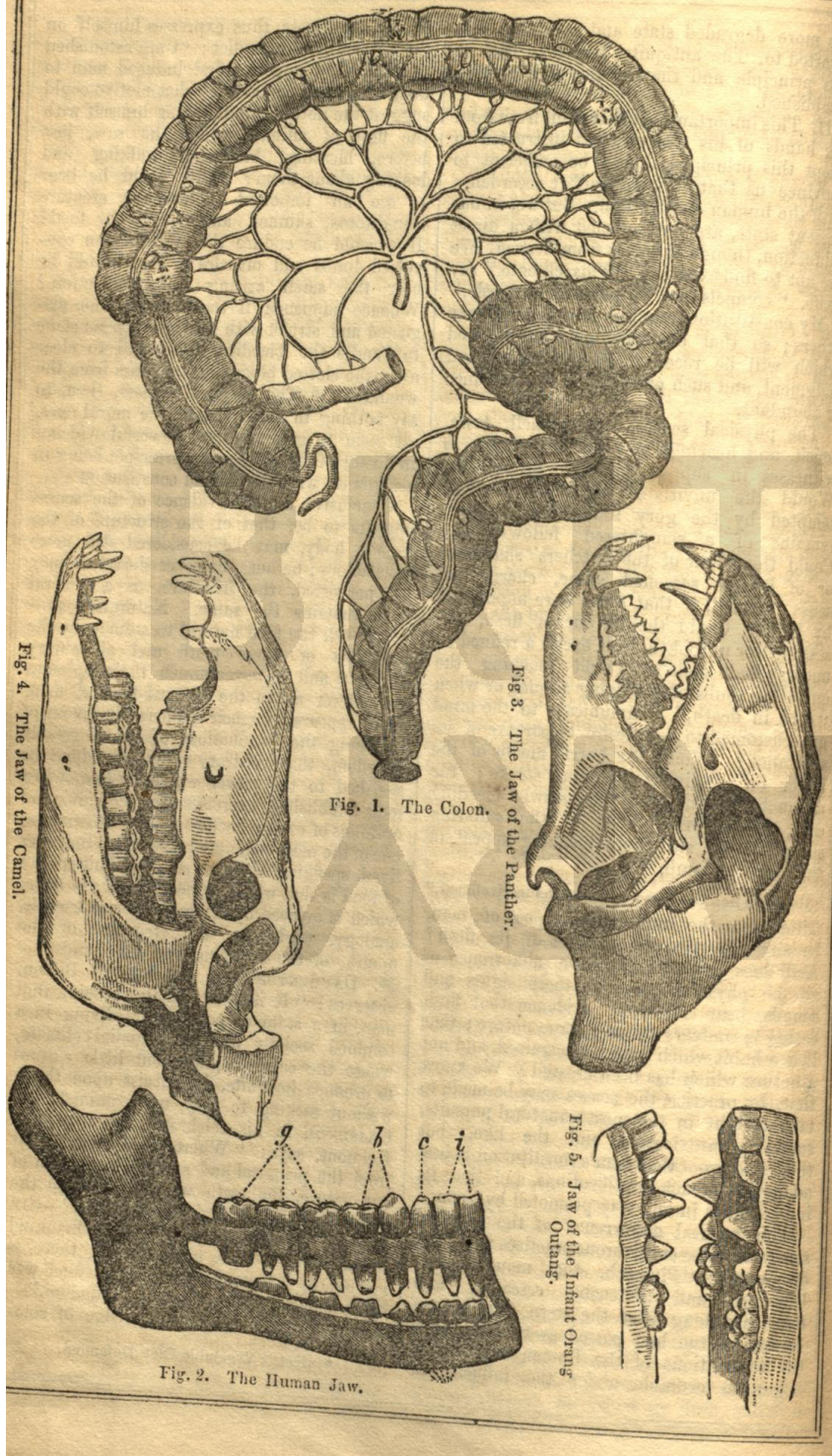


Figure 2.5: Clubb's illustration of the human digestive tract and jaw alongside the jaws of other mammals. *Vegetarian Messenger*, Dec. 1849, 20. *British Library*.



objectification,” or the making of “solid things on which the managing of the social world is based” (10). Social reform groups made use of numbers to concretize social problems such as drunkenness, insanity, and criminality, and to provide a solid basis of “facts” for their amelioration. As Nikolas Rose writes, “[t]o count a problem is to define it and make it amenable to government” (221). The VS learned this tactic from the temperance movement, which, as Clubb pointed out, “had been helped amazingly by figures” (*VM: Vol. 1*, 1849, 98). These figures disclosed that the “annual cost of intoxicating liquors” in the United Kingdom amounted to “more than one hundred millions sterling” (98), a “startling fact” according to Clubb. The VS lacked comparable statistics on “annual expenditure in the United Kingdom for the flesh of animals” (98), because a survey of diets and household consumption had not yet been undertaken, but annual statistics for farmers had “furnished valuable information as to the numbers, and money-value, of the animals fed in the United Kingdom; and from that could be calculated the *cost of feeding* those animals” (98), which Clubb put at 221 million pounds. The statistics that the nation collected to assess the strength of its food supply could be used to critique it. As Clubb claimed, to feed the nation with an equivalent amount of nutrition from beans would cost a mere £37, 293, 750, and thus a vegetarian diet would save the nation 183 million pounds (figure 2.6).

On the one hand, Clubb’s calculations based vegetarian arguments on facts rather than moral sentiment, but, on the other, they implied that “facts” and “numbers” were part of, and revealed, a moral system. Clubb wanted to demonstrate the truth of vegetarianism according to the terms of rationality without any appeal to emotion. To do so, he added up the costs of husbandry; this analysis of producing animals reframed the everyday practice of eating them by situating consumption at the end of the long chain of production: “the practice of eating the flesh of animals involves other practices which need to be mentioned: the rearing of animals; the fattening of animals; the slaughtering of animals, and the preparation of animal carcasses for

of flesh to the grazier, farmer, or stockfeeder, which, although it would be far below the cost of flesh to the consumer, might enable them to form something like an estimate of the loss sustained by the nation, through a practice which, he believed, was opposed alike to the nature of man, and to the highest and best interests of the human race.

Animals.	Number kept as Stock.	Estimated Value.	Cost of Feeding.	
			At, per Head.	Annual Total.
		£.	£. s. d.	£.
Cattle	14,000,000	216,000,000	8 0 0	112,000,000
Sheep	50,000,000	67,000,000	2 0 0	100,000,000
Pigs	18,000,000	18,000,000	0 10 0	9,000,000
Totals	82,000,000	301,000,000	...	221,000,000

Thus, no less than 221 million pounds sterling were expended in feeding 82 million animals. It was always wise to inquire what did they get for their money? What was the real return for that immense outlay?

**FOOD PER DAY FOR 20 LEICESTER SHEEP ENCLOSED IN A FOLD FOR FATTENING.**

Articles Consumed.	Quantity.	Price.	Cost.
Turnips,	27 pecks,	3d.	1s 8½d
Linseed-cake,	10 lbs.	1d.	0 10
Barley,	5 quarts,	1½d.	0 8½
Salt,			0 0½
Hay,			0 12
Total cost per day.....			3s 5d

Twenty sheep thus fed, are shown by the gentleman above alluded to, to have increased in weight from the 1st of Jan. to the 1st April (a period of 90 days), 36 stone 8 lbs. The account then stands thus:—

To feeding 20 sheep 90 days, at 3s. 5d. per day.....	£15 7 6
To 36 st. 8 lbs. of mutton (being the increase in 90 days), at 7s. * a stone .....	12 16 0
Loss to farmer .....	2 11 6
	£15 7 6

In this calculation we have omitted the items labor and manure, which we think may be fairly set off against each other. We have put down the price of mutton at a much higher rate than farmers generally receive for it, as the same gentleman states that he sold '50 at Rother-

Figure 2.6: Clubb's calculations on the price of feeding animals from a lecture published in the *Vegetarian Messenger*, Vol. 1, 98. Similar arguments on the economics of husbandry appeared in a leading article, "Is the Practice of Flesh Eating Harmful to Man?" in the *Vegetarian Advocate*, October 1848, 33. *Google Books* and *The Vegetarian Society Archives*.

food" (*VM: Vol. 1*, Jan 1850, 28). These processes, which represent literal manifestations of pastoral power, entailed financial loss for the farmer and, by extension, to the nation, or so argued Clubb. Taking the lamb as his example for its obvious symbolic weight, and drawing on statistics from the *Royal Journal of Agriculture*, Clubb calculated for his audiences the losses incurred by farmers in the fattening process:

To produce 1 lb. of flesh or fat by this process requires from 60 to 80 ounces of oil cake, when this is the food used, which costs the farmer from 3d. to 5d. This is without reckoning anything for labour, hay, &c. The wholesale price of mutton will seldom average more than 4d. or 5d. per lb., whilst experiments could be adduced to show that the cost of its production in food alone, *during the process of fattening*, is 6d. or 7d. per lb.! (*VM: Vol. 1*, Jan 1850, 28).

This question of how to fatten livestock, or in Clubb's words, of how to produce a pound of flesh, occupied the pages of agricultural journals. For farmers and agricultural improvers, it was a question of profitability, or of how to convert flesh into cash. Employing the same economic

rationality, Clubb worked to demonstrate for his audiences that, rather than bring profit, the practices of rearing animals “occasion[ed] pecuniary losses from beginning to end” (29); more importantly, however, he and other vegetarians reframed the question: one should inquire not into the best way to feed animals for profit, but into the best way to feed humans for health. In doing so, they shifted analysis away from the livestock body to the human body, adopting the same image of a pound of flesh. For instance, James Simpson, Clubb’s mentor in vegetarianism, used this imagery at the second annual meeting of the VS. Pointing out that “the flesh of animals” is stored with water and inedible bone, he argued that it was much more economical to build human bodies from beans and peas:

It may seem a small matter to say that the cost of the flesh of animals is to be considered. But it is no small matter if you apply it to the masses of mankind. Flesh contains 25 per cent. of solid matter, and all the rest is water. When you therefore buy this as low as seven pence per pound, and I will give you all the bone, membrane, and fat, as part of it, and call the whole of this nutritive matter, (which it obviously is not), you cannot have a 100 pound of nutriment from this kind of food without paying £11. 13s. 4d. for it. I trust I am heard and apprehended upon this subject. *To put 100lb. of flesh, blood, and bone into the human system, from the flesh of animals, you must at least pay that sum.* And now, do you ask at what rate you can do this from the products of the vegetable kingdom? I answer at once, if you seek to lay 100lb. of flesh upon the body from beans, at 6s. 11<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>d. per 100lb. you may do so at the cost of 8s. 1<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub>d.—(hear, hear); from peas, at 10s. 5d. per 100lb. you may do it for 12s. 4<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>d. But, to return to the original statement—if you will have it from beef or mutton you must pay the £11. 13s. 4d. (Hear, hear, and continuous applause.) You see, therefore, that this is a great question, as applied to the masses of mankind. (*VA*, Aug 1850, 150; my italics)

The concept of the “flesh”—which here loses its connotations of sin and takes on the meaning of undifferentiated biological matter—rendered humans and other animals comparable and exchangeable in biopolitical calculations. Indeed, the question of how to lay a pound of flesh on the body (whether human or nonhuman) was a question for biopolitics; it was a pastoral question, a question of how best to use the nation’s resources to feed the population. Appropriating the discourses of chemistry, nutrition and economics, particularly the work of Liebig, Playfair, Lankester, and other scientists, Clubb and Simpson called for the cultivation of grains and

vegetables rather than animal flesh for human consumption. In this way, they represented vegetarianism in the seemingly neutral, objective discourse of facts and science, divorcing it from opinion and taste. Their rhetorical aim was not simply to prove that beans were cheaper than beef, but to align “the Vegetarian principle” with what Clubb called “the true economy of nature” (*VM*, Jan. 1850, 29). That is, he and Simpson wanted to demonstrate that the practice of vegetarianism harmonized with divine economic and natural law. Vegetarian advocacy, like the dominant ideology of domestic management, operated under the assumption that economy was immanent in God’s design, while wastefulness represented disobedience or a departure from created order. As Clubb argued, the principle of economy “pervades the universe” (Jan. 1850, 27). He went on, articulating an ecological view of growth, decay, and regeneration: “There is no waste in nature: from the moss which grows on the stubborn rock, to the finest trees which grace our fertile soil; every plant, every tree, every leaf and fibre, has its appointed service to perform in the wise economy of nature” (27). This divinely arranged economy of nature, Clubb argued, ought to guide our actions: “should not every thought, word, and action of our lives serve to preserve the harmony of creation?” (27). Clubb and Simpson wanted to prove that only the practice of vegetarianism could harmonize one’s body with the world’s economy. As Simpson argued in his introduction to *Vegetarian Cookery*, “the Vegetarian system of diet is essential to the harmonious relation intended to exist between man and the external world” (41). To prove this claim and align vegetarianism with the economy of creation, its advocates made use of printed numbers, revealing the profligacy of growing crops to feed animals rather than simply eating those crops directly (*VM*, Jan. 1850, 30). Vegetarianism, on this argument, corresponded with the natural law of economy, a fact that Simpson and Clubb used to bridge their factual arguments with the moral and religious claims of vegetarianism. As Simpson argued, “if they could prove it right in figures, they would not find it wrong in morality; (Hear, hear) since they would never find a truth in

morals contradicted by another in facts” (*VM: Vol. 1*, 1849, 97). If vegetarianism could be shown to accord with “the wise economy of nature” (*VM*, Dec. 1849, 27)—that is, if beans were a cheaper, more efficient form of nutrition than beef—then it was part of the rational order of creation, and must thus align with religious truth as well. Vegetarians developed their own “moral economy” (Thompson 78-9), in which moral claims (nonviolence and sympathy for nonhuman animals) corresponded to economic and natural law.

In the passage I quoted above from the second annual meeting, Simpson assumed that he was, as he said, “heard and apprehended upon this subject” of diet and the cost of flesh (*VA*, Aug 1850, 150), but calculations of pounds and pence, beans and peas, can be difficult to follow, especially, we might imagine, for anyone listening at a lecture or meeting. To supplement these oral arguments, vegetarian cookbooks, such as the *Penny Vegetarian Cookery* which was advertised in the *Messenger* and *Advocate*, translated them into the visual language of the table, teaching readers to calculate along two axes the relative costs and nutritional value of vegetable and animal foods (figure 2.7). Representing their facts and figures in tabular arrangements, vegetarians worked to render the messy business of eating systematic. The purpose of such tabular arrangements was to display vegetarianism’s superior nutritional and economic value for “the family economist”: according to the nutritional categories of the *Penny Vegetarian Cookery*, beans, peas, barely and other vegetable foods contained more “solid matter” and “blood forming principle” (8) at a lower cost than mutton, beef, and lamb. Presenting chemical constitutions and costs along one axis and different foods along another, this table fit vegetarianism within middleclass market values and demonstrated for readers how to rationalize food consumption. Relying on the implied authority of numbers, it taught readers that, contrary to popular understanding, they would receive more “flesh-forming” material from vegetables than animals for their money.

V. TABLE, showing the amount and cost of blood-forming principle, in Vegetable, Farinaceous and Flesh diet. This table should be well studied by every family economist.

ARTICLES OF DIET.	Containing		Supplying	Price per 100 lb.			Cost of Blood-forming Principle per 100 lb.		
	Solid Matter.	Water.	Blood-forming Principle.	£.	s.	d.	£.	s.	d.
	per cent.	per cent.	per cent.						
Beans . .	86	14	31	0	6	11 $\frac{3}{4}$	1	2	6
Peas . .	84	16	29	0	10	5	1	15	11
Barley meal.	84 $\frac{1}{2}$	15 $\frac{1}{2}$	14	0	6	3	2	4	7 $\frac{1}{2}$
Wheat . .	85 $\frac{1}{2}$	14 $\frac{1}{2}$	21	0	9	5 $\frac{1}{4}$	2	4	11 $\frac{1}{4}$
Oats . .	82	18	11	0	7	6 $\frac{1}{2}$	3	8	6 $\frac{1}{2}$
Turnips . .	11	89	1	0	0	8 $\frac{1}{2}$	3	10	10
Potatoes . .	28	72	2	0	1	5 $\frac{3}{4}$	3	13	11 $\frac{1}{2}$
Carrots . .	13	87	2	0	2	0 $\frac{1}{4}$	5	1	0 $\frac{1}{2}$
Veal . . .	25	75	25	2	14	2	10	16	8
Beef . . .	25	75	25	2	18	4	11	13	4
Mutton . .	25	75	25	2	18	4	11	13	4
Lamb . . .	25	75	25	3	15	0	15	0	0

\* Products of the Vegetable kingdom, versus the flesh of animals as food.

Figure 2.7: Table V from *Penny Vegetarian Cookery*. *The Internet Archive*.

The table also seemed to embody the very ideal of order, to demonstrate through its print form that “the Vegetarian System,” unlike the “flesh-eating system,” corresponded to natural law. As Mike Ebster has demonstrated, the table in Victorian England (he studies railway timetables) produced functional, fragmentary reading practices: when we read a table, “we read only what we need to in order to achieve our aims [...] we seek out the morsel of information that we require in that moment” (160). But the tables in the VS’s propaganda were not simply informational or fragmentary. They did of course provide readers with discreet units of information, but they were also part of much more holistic argument: readers were meant to move from the particular details of the table to a wider understanding of vegetarianism’s “truth,” its place in the rational, moral universe that Clubb was at pains to disclose for his audience. Readers, that is, were not meant to extract one piece of information from the table and then move on; rather, they were meant to see that vegetarianism harmonized with the objectivity of numbers, that, in a divinely ordered world, anatomy, chemistry, economy, and morality all complemented each other in supporting the

vegetarian system. Through their grid layout, the nutritional tables of the VS's cookbooks and journals conveyed information *and* confirmed the image of vegetarianism as a rationally ordered system. Indeed, the numerical table in the nineteenth century was almost synonymous with rationality, and its frequent appearance in vegetarian publications integrated the message of vegetarianism within the discourse of numbers and the market.

However, vegetarian advocacy relied not only on demonstrating the economy of the diet for readers, but, as I suggested, on constructing the calculating subject it wanted to address. At the end of his lecture, Clubb turned from numbers on food to numbers on the VS, describing for his audience its structure, publications, and membership, interpellating members of the VS through numbers. Clubb first told his audience that the VS had circulated 5000 copies of the first issue of the *Vegetarian Messenger*, self-reflexively referring to the very journal in which his lecture appeared. Clubb also cited the statistics from its front cover, reporting the total number of members that the society had enrolled in its first year (478), and the number of years they had collectively remained abstinent; numbers, whether of journals or people, made progress tangible and quantifiable (figure 2.8). The VS recognized that, in addition to diagrams and tables, it had to prove the practicality of its diet—prove, that is, that one could live without meat. As Clubb agreed, “evidence of practical experience” was “daily accumulating” (26). In his discussion of the VS's statistics, he further pointed out that the “periods of abstinence from the flesh of animals, of the members of the society, form an interesting feature, and [have] been collected with great care” (26): the vegetarians took “great care” of their bodies, and they took “great care” to collect statistics on the body, measuring their own lives against those of the flesh-eaters. Self-care and advocacy came together in the society's use of statistics. Vegetarians followed numerical tables on nutrition, which I cited above, but they also had the opportunity to incorporate themselves into statistical tables. The vegetarian was a counted and counting being.

The following statistics show that this society is composed of persons in various avocations of life, from a member of the legislature to the humble labourer :

Member of Parliament . . . . .	1
County Magistrates . . . . .	2
Alderman . . . . .	1
Physicians, Surgeons, &c. . . . .	16
Ministers . . . . .	5
Authors . . . . .	7
Professional men . . . . .	43
Merchants . . . . .	15
Farmers . . . . .	6
Private Gentlemen . . . . .	6
Tradesmen, Mechanics, and Labourers . . . . .	245
<hr/>	
Females . . . . .	158
Males . . . . .	320
<hr/>	
Total number of Members . . . . .	478

One month and upwards . . . . .	478
One year . . . . .	342
Ten years . . . . .	199
Twenty years . . . . .	147
Thirty years . . . . .	74
Forty years . . . . .	7
Eighty-six years . . . . .	1
Whole lives . . . . .	79

Evidence of practical experience, in relation to the most laborious occupation, as well as the most sedentary employment, followed by Vegetarians, is daily accumulating. In Manchester, alone, it is calculated that seve-

Figure 2.8: Statistics from Clubb’s lecture, “The Vegetarian Principle,” *Vegetarian Messenger*, Dec. 1849, 26. *British Library*.

Like political states and other reform societies, the VS represented its strength in numbers; it tallied up its publications, finances, letters, and, most importantly, its membership, as signs of progress. Statistical information quantified and made legible the growth of the VS, establishing vegetarianism as a “modern fact” (Poovey 29). However, these numbers were not only addressed externally to demonstrate the strength of the VS to outsiders. The society also made use of numbers internally to organize its members and guide them in the vegetarian system. Vegetarians counted themselves and calculated their everyday lives; they followed numerically ordered meal plans, tables, and recipes, and they listed the number of months and years that they had collectively remained abstinent. Members of the VS were, like serialized texts, represented and organized through the authoritative language of numbers; just as importantly, vegetarians read the body as a text, as a sign of vegetarianism’s claims to health and longevity. The diffusion of vegetarianism, and the campaign to diffuse information on the subject, relied on distributing printed texts, but also on using the society’s members as texts, as arguments incarnate. The instrumental goal of the movement’s statistical returns was to disprove the necessity of animal protein, but the publication and display of these numbers also invested individual members and



readers in the vegetarian movement and its print media. They could see themselves on the front cover, or spoken of in Clubb's lectures. Hence, the reliance on accumulating "information" shaped not only vegetarian propaganda, but also the lives of vegetarians.

### **Dissemination of Information**

The question remains, how did the information in Clubb's public lectures circulate and reach readers? As the organ of the VS, the *Vegetarian Messenger* disseminated doctrinal and practical knowledge on vegetarianism, but it also reported on the activities of vegetarians and the vegetarian movement, orienting the reader's gaze outward, from reading about vegetarianism to participating in vegetarian activism. For instance, the journal published the texts of Clubb's lectures, while also containing advertisements for the lectures themselves (figure 2.9). A notice on the inside cover of the September 1849 issue, which I referred to above, notified readers of the "PUBLIC MEETINGS" that were scheduled to take place throughout Manchester that month: Clubb, along with others, would appear at the Mather Street Temperance Hall on the fourth and twenty-fifth; at the Miles Platting Mechanics' Institution on the second and sixteenth; at the Middleton Temperance Hall on the fifteenth and twenty-second; and at the Salford Library on the seventh and twenty-first. The repetition (two dates at each location) was important: rather than a one-off event, it sustained interest in the vegetarian movement over a period of time and allowed vegetarians to generate conversations and distribute tracts in the local community.<sup>21</sup>

Newspapers contributed to this conversion, creating anticipation beforehand through advertisements and sustaining interest afterward through reports on the lecture. Indeed, in the days following Clubb's lectures, reports would appear throughout the pages of vegetarian journals

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<sup>21</sup> See van Wyhe's work on scientific lectures: "The meaning of public lectures for us as historians should not be limited to a speaker and an audience at specific time in a particular place but should be seen as an occasion for increased thought and talk about a science over a period of days before and after the actual lectures" (71).

as well as in general publications such as the *Manchester Examiner and Times*. For instance, on September 19<sup>th</sup> the *Manchester Examiner* published a report on Clubb's appearance at the Middleton Temperance Hall that month (figure 2.10). The paper cited and extracted Clubb's arguments, bringing them to a broader audience, but it also supported Clubb's contestation of flesh eating in unintentional ways. Indeed, newspapers often embodied debate not through direct exchanges but through their atomistic page layout, which could inadvertently reinforce vegetarian arguments by positioning them in a meaningful relationship with other news items. For instance, the *Manchester Examiner's* brief notice of Clubb's lecture appeared alongside a report on "Unwholesome Food" (figure 2.11). The paper brought publicity to Clubb's lecture at the Middleton Temperance Hall, summarizing his argument that "the physical, intellectual, and moral health of the people would be very much improved by abstinence from the flesh of animals" (19 Sept. 1849, 7), but, in the adjacent column, it also informed readers that, "[o]n Monday, at the Borough Court, John Shore, a butcher in Churchgate, was charged with having in his possession a quantity of meat unfit for human consumption" (7). Without making any commentary or a direct connection between the two self-contained reports on vegetarianism and condemned meat, the *Manchester Examiner* allowed readers to infer for themselves why their health might be improved by abstinence from flesh; the genre of periodical, as Margaret Beetham argues, allows readers to construct their own text (98). Periodicals and newspapers produce new meaning and possible readings through spatial juxtapositions; like numerical tables, the pages of newspapers present readers with fragmented, nonlinear units of information in columns and rows, placing different genres and new items alongside one another. A report on a vegetarian meeting might find itself next to a story on unwholesome meat. The point here, however, is not just about an unintended coincidence or juxtaposition, but about how the multivocal miscellaneity of the press integrated

vegetarianism alongside other vastly different genres and subjects. At a time when vegetarianism was seen as a separatist subculture, the press incorporated it into other discourses.

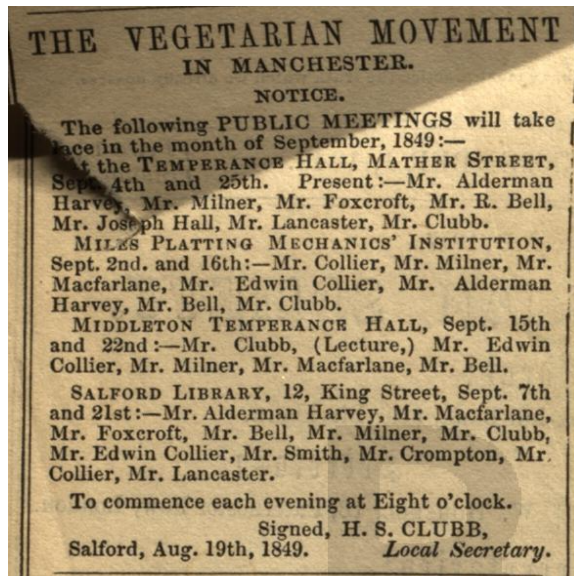


Figure 2.9: Advertisement for public meetings, *Vegetarian Messenger*, Sept 1849. *British Library*.

**LECTURE.**—On Saturday evening last, the large room of the Temperance Hall, Middleton, was crowded. The Rev. T. Hamer, Independent minister, was chairman. Mr. Clubb, of Manchester, delivered a lecture on the vegetarian movement. The lecture was illustrated by diagrams. The lecturer stated that the physical, intellectual, and moral health of the people would be very much improved by abstinence from the flesh of animals. At the conclusion of the lecture, Messrs. R. Milner and Edwin Collier, of Manchester, addressed the audience on the same subject. A vote of thanks was given to the lecturer, and the meeting broke up at a quarter to ten o'clock.—The discourses on the above subject were listened to with great attention, and a number of vegetarian tracts were distributed.

Figure 2.10: Clubb in the *Manchester Examiner and Times*, 19 September 1849, 7.

**UNWHOLESOME FOOD.**—On Monday, at the Borough Court, John Shore, a butcher in Churchgate, was charged with having in his possession a quantity of meat unfit for human consumption.—The case being fully proved, the bench observed that it was a very bad one, and fined the defendant £4 and costs.

Figure 2.11: A notice for “Unwholesome Food” that appeared in the column alongside the account of Clubb’s Lecture in the *Manchester Examiner and Times*, 19 September 1849, 7.

## Conclusion

The VS did not itself invent biopolitics; it did not make the fostering and feeding of human life an object of political calculation, but it did respond to this technology of social and somatic regulation. Biopolitical discourse was an adversary and an ally: the VS challenged orthodox medical science, but the nineteenth century's preoccupation with gathering information on human health, hygiene, and sanitation also provided the vegetarians with their rhetorical and tactical elements. The practice of vegetarianism, as a way of caring for the body, represented a mode of counter-conduct that took up the very biopolitical terms it resisted. At a time when pastoral agencies and the state were becoming invested in regulating human and nonhuman life, the VS took the body's habits, desires, and sustenance as its site of transformation. The vegetarians politicized their bodies, fusing social protest with living biology. This reading of nineteenth-century vegetarianism follows a suggestion Foucault himself makes regarding resistance to biopower: "against this power that was still new in the nineteenth century, the forces that resisted it relied for support on the very thing it invested, that is, on life and man as a living being [...] life as a political object was taken at face value and turned back upon the system bent on controlling it" (145). The vegetarians turned their own lives back upon what they called "this flesh-eating, blood-spilling system" (*VM*, Jan 1850, 27). However, when Foucault speaks of taking "life as a political object," he means, of course, human life, or "man as a living being" (*Sexuality* 145). Indeed, as Nicole Shukin points out (9-11), when Foucault defines biopolitics as "the entry of life into history" (Foucault 141), he has in mind "the life of the human species" (Foucault 141), which in the nineteenth century became subject to knowledge-power (142-43). The vegetarians of the nineteenth century created a biopolitics of themselves in the name of non-human life. They adopted modern biopolitical technologies, such as statistics, in order to regulate their bodies, shaping themselves into embodied arguments to promote their humane diet.

The point I want to underscore here is that animal husbandry, the government of animals by men, is the model around which Foucault articulates the conduct of “men,” and thus pastoral power, as Foucault defines it, is premised on a naturalized species hierarchy. As Shukin argues, Foucault and theorists of biopolitics too readily assume that “the ‘species body’ at stake in the logic of biopower is predominantly human” (9) without taking into consideration the prior production of nonhuman animals as “bare life” (10). “Pastoral power” could not be used to as an explanatory metaphor for “the government of men” unless it was taken as natural that humans control other animals, and that animals stand as the emblems of the bare, biological existence which is seized upon by power. Controlling animal life seems to be an obvious and undisputed fact of being human for Foucault. The art of government begins when the pastoring of life is transposed into the human realm, that is, when “men” are conducted like “animals.” Thus, the animal, in Foucault’s pastoral metaphor of government, becomes what Carol Adams terms “the absent referent” through which “the animal disappears both literally and conceptually” (127):

The structure of the absent referent is enacted when the treatment of some beings is appropriated as a metaphor for the treatment of other beings. Within such a structure, animals are first made absent and then are reinstated as metaphors for describing experiences of human beings. (*Sexual Politics of Meat* 58)

Looking at the two sides, tenor and vehicle, of Foucault’s pastoral metaphor (a metaphor in which governing humans is equated with feeding animals) allows us to articulate the dual intervention of the VS into the government of humans and the lives of animals. For Foucault, biopolitics, “the administration of bodies and the calculated management of life” (*History of Sexuality* 140), supplanted the pastoral relationship between church and laity, and absorbed it into modern technologies for the government of human populations (“Subject” 782). The VS resisted conventional “pastoral power” in two interrelated ways: it pursued a different form of conduct, followed its own leaders and pastors, and aimed to guide the human population toward alternative

pastures, but its practice also resisted the basic concept of pastoring, the feeding and fattening of nonhuman animals for human consumption—a process which, in the nineteenth century, lost its idyllic pastoral image and became a global, steam powered enterprise (Perren, *Taste*, 1-23). The VS was, thus, counter-pastoral rather than pastoral: as the purveyors of a new way of life, they adopted the techniques of pastoral power and the cultural repertoire of statistical social reform to convert others to vegetarianism, but their message and practice aimed to subvert the very pastoral premise of this power technique: the human control of non-human life.

### 3. *Viva Voce*: Testimony and Correspondence in the *Vegetarian Advocate* and *Vegetarian Messenger*

The Vegetarian Society has been instrumental in establishing at least one important fact, viz, that some persons possess a high degree of health, strength, and enjoyment, without partaking of the flesh of tortured and slaughtered animals. Many bear evidence by their personal appearance, and are glad to corroborate *viva voce*, as well as by written testimony, that after a long trial of the Vegetarian diet, they are in much better condition, physically and mentally, than they were previously, when upon what is commonly called a mixed diet. (*VM Vol. 5*, 1854, 5)

At the VS's annual banquet in 1848, William Horsell, Secretary for the society, publisher of the *Vegetarian Advocate*, and an enthusiastic hydropath, used his allotted time before the assembly to narrate his conversion to vegetarianism, describing the anatomical evidence that caused him to “rethink and rewrite” his previous opinions on diet (“Report” 14). But, after citing several renowned naturalists (such as Linnaeus and Cuvier), Horsell claimed that scientific authority only goes so far: vegetarian dietetics rested not on theory but on practice. Horsell, to borrow Foucault's terminology, represented diet as “a technique of the self” (*Use of Pleasure*, 10-11), an exercise through which the subject transformed his or her existence and thereby gained access to truth—the “truth” for vegetarians being “Truth in relation to the food of man” (*VM*, Sept 1849, 1). For the VS, the truth could not be studied; it had to be lived. As Horsell argued:

so far as authority goes, the matter [of diet] is settled beyond dispute [...] But the best proof which can be had on this subject is the *practical test*, and if you submit yourselves to this, you can speak as we can, having tried both sides of the question. I was once asked what would be a fair trial? And my reply was,—‘*Try the vegetarian system as long as you have tried the other, and you will have given it a fair trial*’ (“Report” 14).

The vegetarians laid great emphasis on the practical test; it established the body, rather than an external authority, as the site of knowledge production. Horsell's choice of words here (test, system, and submission) articulates some of the key characteristics of vegetarianism in the mid-nineteenth century, particularly its interplay of passivity and activity, submission and agency:

through the willing submission to a prescribed system of practices and prohibitions, one became the ruler of oneself and achieved freedom from the ailments that were said to oppress the nineteenth-century subject—particularly the national scourge of dyspepsia. I want to draw attention to the way in which Horsell, dismissing scientific “authority,” grounds the right to speak in personal experimentation, specifically connecting eating with speaking: only once you have subjected yourself to a “practical test” of vegetarianism, then “you can speak as we can” (14). Practice gave one the right to speak. What one had ingested authorized one’s discourse, compelled one to speak, and integrated one within the corporate vegetarian body: through this vocalization, the individual (“you”) became part of the plural subject (“we”). Relating his journey from sickness to health, Horsell seemed unable to contain himself:

I rejoice to tell you, that since becoming a vegetarian I have never taken a particle of medicine; and moreover, I find that my physical and mental capabilities are greater even than they were; and I am so far from feeling any diminution of physical strength or capability for labor, that I am not only able to accomplish more than I ever could, but I do it with a vast increase of enjoyment; for, to me, *labor is a real enjoyment*; and sometimes in the morning, after I have taken my cold bath, I have so much elasticity and vigor, that I hardly know what to do with myself, and I have actually been obliged to run at the rate of six or seven miles an hour in order to expend the physical energy of my system (laughter and cheers). Talk about health and strength! (“Report” 14).

Cold baths, morning jogs, and a love of labour: vegetarians have long enjoyed a reputation for Spartan regimens. Vegetarianism for Horsell was a way of making oneself differently, of enjoying the body more completely. We can take his final exclamation—“Talk about health and strength!”—as an imperative command to his audience and to the readers of his journal: the VS enjoined its members to talk about themselves, about their health, strength, and experience with vegetarianism. One not only practiced vegetarianism, but, like Horsell, felt great pleasure and an obligation to speak about it. The body stood at the centre of these vegetarian confessions, and, because of the cultural taboos on women speaking in public in the mid nineteenth century, this



testifying body tended to be male, especially during the first twenty years of the VS. Horsell seems intent on framing vegetarianism as a masculine practice of self-mastery, making it acceptable for men to care for themselves and what they ate. In a later chapter, I address the cookery and domestic interventions of vegetarianism; in this section I focus on a specific strategy within the vegetarian movement: they called it muscular vegetarianism (Forward 152). I'm interested here in a tradition of vegetarian masculinity, men who were motivated by compassion for animals but turned themselves into a spectacle to be consumed. William Horsell's attention to his superfluous physical energy seems shaped by the contemporary biopolitical conversation on food and labour power, a conversation that, outside of vegetarian circles, attributed immense value to animal protein. Contesting culinary conventions, scientific authority, and the idealization of animal flesh, the VS rested its case on the speaking and eating bodies of its members. They were the medium and the message.

In this chapter, I examine the interaction of words and food in the formation of vegetarian subjects, and I turn toward an analysis of how the VS assimilated the confessional narrative, one of the principal mechanisms of pastoral power according to Foucault, into its counter-pastoral project of dietary reform. Self-revelation developed into an enduring and significant genre of vegetarian propaganda. To promote the image of vegetarian self-mastery, the VS extensively circulated personal narratives in which vegetarians intimately described the effects of the new diet on their lives. Many claimed that they gained in weight and strength. This self-disclosure not only publicized vegetarians' health and happiness, transforming lived experience into evidence, but also represented a significant technique by which vegetarians subjected themselves—that is to say, by which they publicly affirmed their vegetarian identities, constituting themselves as vegetarian subjects. These testimonies of vegetarian experience were narrated orally at social meetings, but quickly became a recurrent feature of the correspondence sections of

vegetarian periodicals, developing into a genre capable of being repeated, imitated, circulated, and modified by different speakers and writers.

These conversion narratives served to complement the VS's statistics, providing concrete, personal details to substantiate the abstract numbers.<sup>22</sup> Their speakers were at once individual and representative; they disclosed particular aspects of their lives, but also spoke as vegetarians, or often as a specific class of vegetarian, such as "The Working Man." This chapter focuses on the representational strategies of the society's confessional narratives as well as their role in the conversion process, or the process of making converts. After an overview of the confession, pastoral power, and self-care, I will refer to several example testimonies from the print media of the VS: I draw from the *Vegetarian Advocate* (1848-1851) and its successor, the *Vegetarian Messenger* (1849-). These journals relied on incorporating the words and contributions of its readers in the construction of the vegetable diet. In these periodicals, correspondence from readers served first of all to create correspondence, or equivalence; that is to say, correspondence created a sense of similarity and commonality among isolated and idiosyncratic vegetarians. Through self-disclosure and the itemization of daily routines, readers constructed a shared understanding of what it meant to be and live as a vegetarian, forging affective bonds through the postal network and the periodical press. The practice of vegetarians in Manchester could correspond to, and with, that of vegetarians in other parts of the country, though such "correspondence" never achieved absolute correlation or mimesis. Discrepancies emerged; vegetarians wrote letters to debate doctrinal issues, and raise practical questions: was John Wesley a vegetarian? What are lentils? Do vegetarians eat eggs? How do you cook tomatoes? The construction of vegetarianism, much like the publication of a periodical, was dialogic and open-

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<sup>22</sup> Maeve Adams argues that this strategy was common in early statistical reasoning: statistical journals deployed numbers and narratives equally (104). The VS's adoption of it suggests an attempt to mimic the authority and methodology of the emerging social sciences.

ended. The serial form of the periodical offered vegetarian readers a shared, public space to monitor and document their incremental progress and month-by-month practice of abstinence.

### **The Food Question**

The VS posed a simple question: *what shall we eat?* (*VM Vol 4*, 1854, 15) It was a question that, they contended, had greater implications than generally acknowledged. As James Simpson lamented, “[m]en do not usually reason upon diet” (“Report” 6), a complaint that became a refrain among food reformers. One of the first steps of vegetarian advocacy was thus to make “men” think about what they ate; it wanted to bring reflection to the repetitive experiences of everyday life, experiences which, by definition, *one does not think about*. Because of their habitual familiarity, the taken-for-granted foundations of life elude critical scrutiny (Felski 78). The VS made use of the print forms of the press and the tactics of social reform to make visible the submerged practices of everyday life.

Why did “men” not “reason upon diet”? The VS considered several answers. Food was a private concern, and its preparation was a subject for women, cooks, and domestic literature, not a matter for serious debate. For a certain type of English masculinity, fastidiousness over food was a sign of superficiality. Food was meant to fulfil a functional purpose: to fuel and repair the human motor so that it could carry out more important tasks. Henry Salt, one of the nineteenth century’s foremost commentators on vegetarianism, pointed out, “[h]ard-working men seem to think there is a sort of merit in ‘not caring about what one eats’” (*FRM*, April 1882, 106). A common objection to vegetarianism, one that was voiced in “a high moral tone,” claimed that, “*Vegetarianism involves too much thinking about one’s food*” (106). It required that one search out new recipes and experiment with “substitutes” for flesh, neither of which were activities for men.

For an example of the masculine distaste for thinking about food, we can look to the VS’s annual report of 1868, which records the presence of William Loyd Garrison, the American

abolitionist, at the VS's banquet. Garrison, an invited guest of Thomas Barker, the secretary of the VS at the time, did not himself practice vegetarianism or extend his abolitionist policies to animals. As he reportedly told the assembly, "[h]e did not profess to be a Vegetarian in the sense of totally abstaining from animal food" (*DF*, Jan. 1868, 2). But, as he further explained, "he cared nothing about the food itself" (2). He saw food, whether animal or vegetable, as a means to an end, not an end or objective in itself. Garrison, like other reformers, did not deem food a worthy object of care; a fixation on eating implied self-indulgence rather than the self-sacrifice required of great men (though it did please him to see so many men and women working together to realize a common objective). Hence, although vegetarianism represented itself as a form of abstinence, "men" objected to it on moral grounds as self-indulgent, an objection that reflects a modern understanding of morality.

Michel Foucault argues that we have inherited a Christian tradition that privileges the ancient injunction to "know yourself" at the expense of the equally important command to "take care of yourself" (*Hermeneutics* 17). He claims that we regard the principle of "taking care of ourselves" suspiciously as sign of egoism or withdrawal from the world, while we regard the renunciation of the self as constitutive of a moral existence (*Ethics* 228). We define morality as one's relationship to others, or as one's obligations to a collective body such as the nation, not as one's relationship to the self: "[t]herefore, it is difficult to see the care of the self as compatible with morality" (*Ethics* 228). This distrust of self-care has not always been the case: in the texts Foucault analyses from Greek and Roman traditions, the injunction to take of oneself formed the basis of morality. The injunction to care for the self, Foucault documents, became a civic duty and "a truly general cultural phenomenon" (*Hermeneutics* 11) in the Hellenistic philosophy; however, it later lost its "autonomy and importance" and was assimilated into "priestly power in early Christianity" (*Use of Pleasure* 11). Within Christianity, Foucault argues, a class of men (priests)

emerged who took responsibility for ministering to the souls of others, brining an end to care of the self as a moral act (*Security* 165; *Ethics* 228).

The distrust of self-care, which Foucault identifies as the fallout of the Christianity and Cartesian philosophy (*Hermeneutics* 14), existed in the nineteenth century and continues in scholarship on the nineteenth century. Social reform movements that involved care of the self came under scrutiny for their alleged attempts at social control. Many saw the thrift of a vegetarian diet as a ploy to teach the working classes domestic retrenchment; that is, it taught people to make do with less rather than demand more. Others simply saw it as an irrelevant whim that had nothing to do with politics. Henry Salt, who attempted to reconcile his vegetarianism with his socialism, noted that critics of food reform contended that it represented only “the personal practice of individuals” (Salt, *Logic*, 101); that is, it was seen as *only* a practice of the self that had “no practical bearing on the forward movement of today” (102). Vegetarians thus not only had to demonstrate their diet’s *practicability*—that it could support life—but also had to prove, to other reformers, its legitimacy as a social movement. For Salt, the fact that vegetarianism, as a “personal practice,” made demands on people individually was both its weakness and its strength: a weakness because it made dietary reform unpopular and “difficult,” but this “difficulty,” the fact that vegetarianism required a long struggle with one’s self, indicated its potential in effecting far-reaching changes. As Salt argued, a “revolution in personal habits, be it remembered, is even more difficult than a revolution in political forms” (111). Precisely because “it was so upsetting to the everyday habits of the average man” (106), vegetarianism had the potential to destabilize the way in which “men” understood themselves. Vegetarianism, as Salt presented it, promised to change society by changing the individuals who made up society.

In previous chapters, I have already suggested that the VS framed vegetarianism as technology of the self; here let me add that they represented their diet as a practice of civic

masculinity and self-government in order make it acceptable for men to think about their food. As Foucault demonstrates in his reading of Greek philosophy, care of the self concerned not only personal, but also political, life (*Ethics* 234). It was, Foucault argues, “one of the main principles for cities, and for social and personal conduct” (226), and he traces its permutations through the writings of Plato, the Epicureans, Stoics, and early Christians. The VS, drawing on a dietary tradition that, they claimed, extended back to Pythagoras, similarly wanted to position care of the self as central to civic life; as we will see below, they associated care of the self with social reform and the progress of society. This tactic appealed to reform-minded men to make vegetarianism appear socially relevant rather than indulgent.

If men did not think about their food, it was not only because they deemed it too everyday a subject. It was also because, for nineteenth-century middleclass audiences, thinking about their food’s origins was unpleasant. As James Simpson commented, “[w]e do not reason upon the daily practices of life or else we would start with concern from the many acts of which we are directly or indirectly the cause in relation to the feeding and slaughtering of animals” (*VA*, Aug 1850, 150). Mrs Beeton, no friend of vegetarians, agreed: “the slaughterhouse, meat eaters try to forget” (704). In their efforts to reform the conditions of slaughterhouses and improve the lives of animal labourers, animal welfare groups of the nineteenth century, much like their twenty-first century counterparts, deployed what Timothy Pachirat terms “the politics of sight,” a strategy which envisions a direct connection between visibility and social change (14). By revealing what was hidden from view (the slaughtering of animals in dark cellars and in unsanitary markets), humanitarians believed they could put pressure on parliament to improve (but not abolish) slaughterhouses, relocating the work of killing from the centre of London to the periphery. The campaign to reform Smithfield Market in the 1850s relied heavily on this strategy of revelation

and revulsion.<sup>23</sup> The VS took another approach. In the 1840s and 50s the VS tended to employ positive arguments in favour of vegetarianism rather than graphic images of animal abuse. Rather than disgust or discipline their audiences with guilt over the suffering of animals, vegetarians offered their practice as care of the self and as a technique for producing one's self. At their banquets and in the press, vegetarians defined themselves as "persons opposed to the eating and consequently killing of animals, or the exercise of any degree of cruelty to procure food" (*Manchester Times*, 29 July 1848, 8). But, pragmatically, they recognized that they could reach a greater audience with arguments grounded in self-care and physiology rather than in the suffering of animals. To paraphrase Foucault, the VS did not speak of sin and salvation; they spoke of bodies and biological processes (*History* 64), presenting vegetarianism as a regimen through which to attain health and strength. They tactically preached the natural salvation of man (a return to his natural diet) in order to indirectly mitigate what they called "cruelty to procure food" (8).

Chloe Taylor, in article on the ethics of eating, laments that, rather than the foreground the aesthetics of the self, animal rights activists of the twenty-first century tend to deploy deontological arguments in support of vegetarianism, using disciplinary rhetoric (guilt, duty, obligation) to stop others from eating animals (81). Indeed, in animal studies discourse, arguments that emphasize our responsibility to the lives of nonhuman animals occupy higher moral ground than those that focus on human health, a hierarchy that, Taylor suggests, does not recognize the tactical significance of food's connection to identity.<sup>24</sup> By contrast, nineteenth-century vegetarians, who retained a religious understanding of food, represented the decision not to eat meat as, in Taylor's terms, a transformative practice *for the human subject* (82), one that exceeded any utilitarian calculation and that, to further borrow Taylor's words, made the individual into "a different kind of

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<sup>23</sup> On the long campaign to reform and remove Smithfield, see Robyn Metcalfe.

<sup>24</sup> See Erica Fudge, "Two Ethics," for a distinction between an ethics centred on human well-being and an ethics centred on the animal other (104).

subject” (81). Conversion to vegetarianism was presented not simply as a moral or rational choice made by the subject; rather, it was a symbolic act that would construct a new subject. Moral and rational arguments did appear in the VS’s print media, but their journals also promised readers a new identity and a cleaner, healthier, purer life. In constructing a counter-cuisine, nineteenth-century vegetarians not only rejected dietary norms, but also undertook what Foucault terms “the politics of ourselves,” experimenting with new practices of self-formation (*Politics and Truth*, 134).

A diverse range of what Foucault terms counter-conduct movements, or counter-pastoral struggles, arose in the nineteenth century—communitarianism, temperance, feminism, hydrotherapy, homeopathy, and, indeed, vegetarianism. According to Foucault, counter-pastoral struggles do not reject the pursuit of salvation, or pursue freedom from power relations as such, but are in search of “a different form of conduct, that is to say: wanting to be conducted differently, by other leaders (*conducteurs*) and other shepherds, toward other objectives and forms of salvation” (194). I have adopted Foucault’s terminology, specifically the term “counter-pastoral,” to describe the VS because it brings forth the society’s historical associations with religious nonconformity—from which it inherited its emphasis on personal conversion, itinerant preaching, and print culture—while the word’s agricultural roots also draw out the VS’s material and worldly objectives: the care and cultivation of life. As I will discuss, the foundation of the VS merged the Bible Christians’ Cowherdite theology with a project for national dietary reform. One can, in fact, find continuity between their dissenting religion and their dissenting diet, or between the rejection of religious authority and the rejection of dietary norms. Both forms of resistance centred on the conduct of the self, refusing the implicit or explicit codes of conduct, while also carving out alternative ways of being. The point here is not only to establish this continuity, but to suggest that early vegetarians adopted the repertoires of pastoral power and resistance for the vegetarian movement, developing tactics to shepherd men and women toward an alternative,



dietary salvation. In the biopolitics of the nineteenth century—which re-defined salvation as health, and equated it with the regular consumption of animal protein—the counter-pastoral struggle, the struggle over how we are conducted throughout our lives, became a struggle over hygiene and diet, a struggle over how to care for the body.

In April 1852, the *Westminster Review* commented on the way vegetarians modified religious themes for secular aims—the health and care of the body. The *Westminster Review* described vegetarianism as “a puritanism of the body” (April 1852, 409), the purpose of which was “the healing, cleansing, and restoration of the animal man” (409). Interpreting the nascent vegetarian movement as “a sign of the times” (408-09), the *Westminster Review* articulated how the language of flesh abstinence medicalized sin and salvation:

modern vegetarianism is by no means confined to visionaries and religious exclusives; it spreads among purists of a very different order. Not only aesthetical young men, with their hair divided down the middle, and demi-pique beards upon their chins, but sturdy men of action—men of the people, phrenologists, natural religionists, general reformers—have here and there begun to take it up [...] In one word, and speaking seriously, vegetarianism is now an embodied power, be it for good or evil [...] It is the puritanism of the body. (April 1852, 408-09)

This passage offers a farcical yet revealing interpretation of mid-century food reformers: they positioned the body as the ultimate ground of truth. They wanted to prove that the Pythagorean diet was no longer the province of romantic visionaries or anemic sentimentalists; and that food was not the domain of epicures and housewives. Rather, serious men now concerned themselves with diet. In a sense, vegetarianism had no choice but to become “an embodied power”: rational debate might convince outsiders of its principles, but vegetarians also had to embody their arguments, proving that they could live and labour without flesh. The healthy body was a central point of contention in early vegetarian campaigns. How, many asked, could they make a man without meat? Vegetarian men, to compensate for their perceived frailty and sentimentality, responded by framing their diet as a practice of self-mastery. Vegetarians depended on their lives:

they were themselves the strongest argument in favour of a humane diet. Measuring and publicly performing their health and strength became tactical move and a duty; as I have said, they developed a biopolitics of themselves.

### **Sin and Salvation: Vegetarian Pastoral Power**

Mr. Catherall had been cured of a long standing dyspepsia, since he had adopted the Vegetarian diet three months ago. [...] He received the system with ridicule at first, was induced to try it, but on giving it further consideration, he felt a 'new being,' as if he had been taken from the lowest depths of misery, and transported to Paradise (*V&A*, Dec 1849, 40).

First preached and practiced among the mill workers and artisans of Ancoats and Salford, two of Manchester's most impoverished industrial districts (Lineham 303; Pickering and Tyrrell 461), vegetarianism promised salvation—spiritual, moral, and physiological. It is difficult to overemphasize the influence of the doctrines of salvation, conversion, and biblicalism on the vegetarian movement, doctrines that it inherited directly from its Bible Christian founders, and more generally from the evangelical revivals that spread through all denominations in the eighteenth century and made religious conversion central to the project of social reform in the nineteenth century (Gilbert 51-58; Bebbington 2-4; Claybaugh 22). As Peter Lineham notes, many nineteenth century protestant sects “traced their roots to the eighteenth century Evangelical revival, although they were not necessarily orthodox growths from it” (“Sects” 150). The revival was “fluid in its theology, structures, and leadership” (150), and it encompassed competing congregations (Methodists, Baptists, Unitarians, Congregationalists). Richard Altick and other scholars use the term “evangelical” to refer to this diverse range of Protestant groups that were committed to salvation through Christ, actively pursued the conversion of others, and emphasized reading as a spiritual, enlightened act (Altick 99; Fyfe 3; Bebbington 1-17). Thus, despite the multid denominational basis of evangelical nonconformity in England, it exhibited

several common features, which Bebbington has influentially defined: “*conversionism*,” or the rebirth and transformation of the individual; “*activism*,” or the energetic commitment to social and religious duties; “*biblicism*,” or emphasis on the textual authority of the Bible; and “*crucicentrism*,” or the centrality of the cross and Christ’s atonement for human sin (Bebbington 3).

The teetotal Bible Christian Church, which William Cowherd founded in 1800 in Manchester when he split from the Swedenborgian New Church (Pickering and Tyrrell 467; Lineham 284; Metcalfe, *Memoir*, 8), was not an orthodox outgrowth of the eighteenth-century evangelical revival; Lineham, for instance, regards them as one of the “more unusual sects in English history” (“Restoring” 207). Their Cowherdite variation on swedenborgian theology placed them at odds with other evangelicals, even those influenced by Swedenborg’s visions, while their dietary heresy isolated them from rest of society. But, to promote their diet, nineteenth-century vegetarians still adopted the evangelical repertoire of collective action, relying on networks of itinerant lecturers, the active participation of its members, and the mass circulation of literature. Perhaps most importantly they made conversion and salvation central to the experience of vegetarianism. The vegetarian movement developed into a conversionist social movement: believing that “lives need[ed] to be changed” (Bebbington 2), it energetically spread the good news that health and happiness could be achieved through diet. The VS actively tried to convert, or turn, others toward vegetarianism, while the practice itself required a moral conversion, a turn in how one faced food and nonhuman animals. But it also demanded a conversion of the self, a transubstantiation of the body. The vegetarian had to constitute the body from new materials. Conversion to vegetarianism was thus represented as a new birth. For its advocates, the political relevance of vegetarian self-care lay in this creation of a new self.

Hall and Davidoff argue that the theological belief in individual salvation fostered secular social reform and humanitarian campaigns to save the helpless and the lost (25). The fundamental

principle was that salvation was open to all, creating, at least in theory, “spiritual equality” (73, 77). Building on Hall and Davidoff, Amanda Claybaugh has argued that the doctrine of salvation made possible the very concept of social reform (21-22). Social reform, she demonstrates, emerged when a combination of Enlightenment rationality and evangelical nonconformity called into question the basic premise of paternalistic charity: the inevitability of suffering (21-22). Whereas charity saw suffering as ameliorable yet ineliminable, or as the preordained result of God’s will, the evangelical belief that “all were worthy to be saved” (Davidoff and Hall 25) made it possible and morally imperative to rescue “those otherwise condemned to eternal damnation” (Davidoff and Hall 95; Claybaugh 22). The belief in universal salvation replaced the patient acceptance of suffering with an active attempt to intervene in the world, most often to protect the weak and save the wicked: women, slaves, the poor, prisoners, and drinkers (Davidoff and Hall 25). With the rise of the humane movement and creation of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals in 1824, nonhuman animals too became the objects of middleclass sympathy. In their attempts to save the downtrodden, evangelicals aimed at reclaiming individuals rather than changing political structures: they believed that society’s reformation had to “begin with individual salvation” (Hall and Davidoff 82). As Claybaugh succinctly states, “structural change took place, for nineteenth century reformers, one individual at time” (24), and thus, social reformers “conceived of the individual as both the agent and site of transformation” (23).

The Bible Christian vegetarians saw abstinence from flesh as the means of saving the individual and, ultimately, of effecting structural change. For the Reverend William Cowherd, abstinence from flesh had a material and spiritual sense—it made possible a healthy body and a spiritual life—and this duality allowed vegetarians to present their diet in both religious and scientific registers, depending on the audience. Vegetarianism was true in science and religion, or so they argued. But, even as its advocacy took on increasingly natural, scientific, and political

themes and objectives, it retained a fundamental assumption of Cowherd's theology: the belief that salvation came through food and the care of the body. Vegetarians envisioned the body as redeemable and perfectible: by returning to humanity's alleged natural diet, individuals could save themselves and achieve a state of health, happiness, and self-sufficiency that was grounded in the laws of nature and religion. According to Cowherd, abstinence from flesh and alcohol starved the passions and spiritualized the body, preparing one for the millennium (Lineham 298-99). The divergence from conventional evangelicalism is thus clear: whereas most evangelicals stressed that redemption was freely given to those who turned toward God, the Bible Christians suggested, perhaps heretically, that individuals could save themselves. By transforming one's diet, one could transform oneself and contribute to larger structural changes.

While Cowherdite vegetarianism appears as an ascetic practice of the mind over the body, nineteenth-century vegetarians also reversed the causal relationship between mind and body, and presented their practice as the body over the mind. By vegetarianizing the body, they believed they could alter the mind: physiology could influence psychology; or, put another way, the vegetarians suggested that who we are derives more from how we habitually and materially interact with the world than from the thoughts or ideas we develop in our heads. In Foucauldian terms, we shape ourselves through conduct (*Use* 9-10). This view is implicit in the argument that vegetarianism must be tried to be understood: practice vegetarianism and then you will arrive at the truth, as William Horsell argued in my introduction to this chapter. For this reason, advocating a vegetarian diet was seen as more fundamental than preaching religious conversion or any other moral reform. As Peter Lineham notes, "in a competitive religious arena, [the Bible Christian] sect had little chance of flourishing" ("Restoring" 217). However, anxiety over the national food supply, cholera epidemics, and the effects of industrialization meant that a vegetarian regimen could gain traction in the field of sanitary health reform, presenting itself as

the physiological restoration of the social body. The Bible Christians believed they could indirectly lead others to religious conversion by first advocating a fleshless diet, insofar as its spiritual and material aspects were inseparable. The material practice would, they believed, also produce a profound moral conversion, a complete reformation of body, mind, and spirit.

The vegetarians' advocacy of their diet rather than their religion stemmed from their belief that natural law and religious truth corresponded. For instance, in his speech at the first annual meeting of the VS, Brotherton acknowledged that different people came to vegetarianism for different reasons, but he contended that all truths harmonized: "if a thing be true in one respect it is true in all, and therefore, whether you take up this [vegetarian] principle on account of your health, or from principles of humanity, or from duty, be assured that the effect will be the same" ("Report" 4). The same consistent "effect" produced by vegetarianism was the total moral and physiological transformation of the individual. Because all truths (economic, political, scientific, moral, and religious) were complementary and inseparable, the reason one first adopted vegetarianism did not matter: one could practice it for entirely "external" or material reasons, but the ultimate effect would be an internal spiritual revolution. A moral transformation was the effect, not just a cause, of converting to vegetarianism. The initial reason one decided to take up the diet was thus of no consequence: Brotherton promised that, if one practiced vegetarian habits of diet, one would, whether one wanted to or not, experience an inner spiritual change.

James Simpson, the VS's president, made a similar argument to his audience at the annual banquet the following year. Simpson invited his listeners to examine vegetarianism on "economical grounds, as a benefit to the working classes, in enabling them to build up the human frame at the cheapest rate" (150), or to "[l]ook at it as improving the health, the physical constitution, making men happier in all their habits of life" (*VA*, Aug 1849, 150). But, as Simpson told his audience, vegetarianism brought one more than external or material benefits: "though you

enter it merely upon these grounds, you shall see that, as hundreds of others have seen, that it has its moral bearings, that the mind is elevated above these external views of it, that it is seen to be connected with high morality, and, as it were, to take in every philanthropic movement whatever” (150). Thus, Simpson too evinced a belief in dietary determinism: he did not quite say that “you are what you eat,” but did suggest that what you eat shapes who you are. For this reason, he informed his audience that to understand the effects and truth of vegetarianism, they had to try it:

To those then who would learn this subject, I recommend them to take it on its bare external grounds; but if their objects of life be in favour of truth, and they desire to follow it out if they find it true, not to consider that which prevails in society as a standard for their conduct, [...] but to look at it in its effects, and try it experimentally to know its value (*VA*, Aug 1849, 150)

We see here one way in which vegetarian advocacy worked through conduct and counter-conduct, acting and being acted upon. Simpson attempted to conduct the lives others—he persuaded them to take up his diet—but he also had to leave room for them to conduct themselves, allowing them to try the vegetable diet. Furthermore, in calling upon, or even challenging, others to “try it experimentally,” Simpson also framed vegetarianism itself as a form of counter-conduct that resisted what he described as prevailing standards for behaviour. He acknowledged that those interested in learning about the diet may study it on “external grounds” (learning about its thriftiness or healthiness), but, if they wished to pursue its truth and understand its effects, they had to experience it themselves. By emphasizing the importance of practice over theory, Simpson may seem simply to demonstrate the common adage of practicing what you preach, but he and other vegetarians also articulated something more than making one’s behavior consistent with, or exemplary of, a moral code: not just practicing what you preach, but using your practice to transform who you are.

In their appeals to others to “try it experimentally,” Simpson and Brotherton effectively offered a dietary version of the “Pascalian wager”: practice vegetarianism first and then you will

believe in it, understand it, and “know its value” (and not the other way around: first believe in vegetarianism and then practice it). As Louis Althusser argues, Pascal’s formula (which Althusser summarizes as “Kneel down, move your lips in prayer, and you will believe”) demonstrates that ideology exists in actions, and not in the mind; or, more precisely, that ideas are conditioned by practices and by the rituals that govern practice (Althusser 168).<sup>25</sup> This theory of ideology, according to which belief follows from ritualized action, finds expression in Judith Butler’s account of gender performativity (gender identity is nothing more than ritualized repetition), but also in the ideology of humanism or human superiority. The material practice of eating animals, as Chloe Taylor points out, grounds ideological views of human primacy over other animals: “It is not the case that we first determine that we are superior to non-human animals and then we conclude that we have the moral license to eat them. Rather, it is through our very eating of other animals that we constitute our superiority” (75). Erica Fudge similarly articulates how the rituals of the table produce an image of ourselves: “meat-eating,” she argues, “makes human dominion seem ‘authentic,’ a common and unproblematic part of everyday life” (149), and thus it naturalizes “the structures of order that support human primacy” (149). Our image of ourselves, on this argument, derives from our practices.

James Simpson, Joseph Brotherton, and other prominent advocates ventured that a change in practice, the decision not to eat meat, could have far-reaching effects, creating different subjects and a different image of the human. Henry Clubb, for instance, told an audience that even if he possessed “all the power and eloquence of ancient and modern time” (31), he still “could not impart to you a hundredth part of the information which you can obtain for yourselves, by giving a fair trial to the Vegetarian Practice” (*VM*, Jan 1850, 31). However, the

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<sup>25</sup> Slavoj Žižek paraphrases Pascal’s wager: “leave rational argumentation and submit yourself simply to ideological ritual [...] act *as if* you believe, and you will believe” (*Sublime Object* 39).



importance of the “fair trial” lay not simply in the fact that one could learn more about vegetarianism by practicing it, but in the fact that one could change oneself and how one thought, felt, and acted. As Clubb explained,

The reason is this, our thoughts flow from our desires; and whilst we continue in a practice, be it good or bad, we are most likely to incline towards it, and our reasoning and thinking will remain in accordance with it. But a *change of practice* has a wonderful effect upon the feelings, thoughts, and reasoning powers, especially if persevered in throughout consistently. (*VM*, Jan 1850, 31, Clubb’s emphasis)

This privileging of practice over argumentation as the final ground of truth was a central tenet of the vegetarian movement. On the one hand, it might simply have been easier to tell someone, *Oh, just try it*, than to completely convince them of vegetarianism’s veracity. On the other hand, Simpson, Brotherton, and Clubb also seem to have been tapping into an Althusserian notion of ideological commitment. As Clubb argues, a change in practice will effect a correlative change in thoughts and feelings. If a potential recruit could be convinced to experiment with the diet, to follow its recipes and dietary tables, to attend meetings and lectures, to subscribe to the magazine, and generally to submit to the ritual of living as a vegetarian, then he or she might begin to notice its effects, to believe in them, and come to identify with vegetarianism and see themselves as a vegetarian. The aim of its advocates, in other words, was to make others act as if they believed, on the wager that they would retroactively arrive at belief through ritualistic repetition.

Because of its alleged transformative effects, Simpson argued that vegetarianism struck deeper and rose higher than other social reforms: it affected the most basic element of existence, but also elevated “man” to his original, spiritual state, reuniting him with his Creator (*VA*, Aug 1849, 151). Vegetarians could, therefore, tactically present their diet as a self-interested or utilitarian practice (emphasizing what Simpson above called its “bare external grounds”) while also remaining confident that, wherever it took root, the vegetable diet would effect an internal conversion. The VS not only wanted to guide others toward the adoption of vegetarian habits of

diet. It thought that diet itself could function as mechanism to improve and cultivate human beings: it believed that building the body out vegetarian rather than animal sources would create radically different—and better—people. In this sense, they conducted ideological struggle at the level of the tastes and appetites of the body. Whereas evangelicals struggled over “English hearts and minds” (Hall and Davidoff 95), vegetarian advocates struggled over English stomachs and bowels. This, then, is what I mean by VS’s pastoral power: politics and ideological struggle carried out at the level of biology, daily subsistence, habit, and conduct.

### **Transmutation**

A leading article in the *Vegetarian Advocate* from December 1849, titled “Transmutation,” articulates the VS’s shift from the religious discourse of the Bible Christian Church to a more explicitly biological language that represented vegetarianism as a practice of self-care and self-transmutation. James Secord relates that “transmutation” or evolution was a controversial concept in the 1840s, associated with the atheism of French physiologists. In 1844, Robert Chambers’ anonymously published work, *Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation*, defused the threat of evolution for an English middleclass audience by incorporating it within a narrative of progress that synthesized developments in geology and astronomy with zoology (Secord 109). The theme of progress (in the creation of the cosmos, the history of the earth, and the evolution of species) unified “the new genres of reflective science” (56). Elsewhere Secord, along with Hopwood and Schaffer, has argued that the sequential arrangement of specimens in exhibits and world fairs, and the serial publication of journals, exploited serial reading practices to introduce evolutionary ideas to audiences (261-2). Buoyed by contemporary debates on evolution and progress, the *Vegetarian Advocate* skirted the most controversial subject—the creation of new species through mutation—by restricting its discussion to the level of the individual rather than the species. Vegetarianism effected a personal transmutation, or “a proteanic metamorphosis” of

the body (*VA*, Dec 1848, 67-8), which, the *Advocate* claimed, connected it to the progressive movement of society. The image of the body that emerged from the *Vegetarian Advocate* was that of a malleable body, a body that could be re-materialized through the exercise of a vegetarian regimen. Vegetarianism domesticated the evolutionary narratives of cosmology, geology, and zoology and brought the science of transmutation to bear upon everyday life and the body.

With ideas about evolution and transmutation circulating in popular, scientific, and radical print culture, the *Vegetarian Advocate* represented vegetarianism as a Lamarckian act of self-willed mutation, associating it with both the new sciences and the ethos of self-improvement. The article, “Transmutation,” began in declarative, strident tones: “CONSERVATISM seems almost always triumphant, yet Mobility carries the day. You can fix nothing. Every attempt to prevent change may rather hasten than retard it” (Dec 1848, 67). The author enjoined readers to harness change in themselves; notably, this maxim on Heraclitean flux paralleled and reflected the news culture of the nineteenth century:

The common inquiry of ‘what news’ in a world where nothing is new, is but a declaration that change is expected or desired. Mutation is the eternal law. The seasons, the productions, the appearances in external nature, are but types of revolutions in the world of thought, and correlative changes must take place in opinions, institutions, and laws. Yes, every man, every thing, has the nature of Proteus. For as all things exist PRO-DEUS, that is, through or FOR GOD, all things are Protean (*VA*, Dec 1848, 67).

By presenting transmutation as a model of personal and social reform rather than a theory on humanity’s origins in other species, the article mitigated its materialist and atheist implications. Transmutation was something to realize in one’s self. Political reform, the journal suggested, would remain too superficial if it did not follow from a change in the material constitution of individuals and the foundations of society: “changes requisite to make life pass at all smoothly, are not merely of a political kind. They must go deeper than questions of administrations and parties. [...] The proteanic movement to be produced in society, is the great problem” of the day (67).

The theory of transmutation offered a biological adaptation of the evangelical emphasis on the conversion of the individual; transmutation, like evangelical social reform, envisioned structural change taking place one individual at time (Claybaugh 24). The article presented vegetarianism as a technique for transmutation, or a technique “to proteanize the body” (68), which would in turn produce a wider “transformation of the superstructure” (67), the central premise of the *Vegetarian Advocate* being that the personal and political, individual and structural, as well as the physical and the moral, were intimately “interlinked” (67). A change in diet “from a carnivorous to a farinaceous and fruit diet” (68) would bring about a transmutation that was at once physiological and moral, or as the article contended: “physical changes operate spiritual metamorphoses” (68). The journal admitted that an innate morality, or “inborn tenderness” (68), was “preferable” to an acquired one (68), but it also contended that material, external practices could effect internal and spiritual mutations, whether or not the practitioner consciously intended these consequences:

Exterior changes, though not adopted on the highest principle, or with a perfect consciousness of their value, may ultimately have the deepest worth. Few men are so happily born into the world as not to require at least one proteanization. The dictum is spoken to all, ‘ye must be born again.’ (68)

The *Vegetarian Advocate* synthesized evangelical doctrines of salvation and re-birth with speculation on the mutability of life; to be “born again” required that one proteanize the body through diet. This vegetarian doctrine, that “physical change” could effect “moral transmutation” (68), was central to vegetarianism’s biopolitics (its belief that individuals and ultimately populations could be transformed through the substance of diet), but it was also part of its appeal and wager: it promised a re-birth. In an anti-essentialist gesture, the *Advocate* suggested that one’s identity, body, and being were mutable; and that the training of oneself through diet could bring one a new body, mind, and soul, and could align one with the progressive movement of society: “The element of the body being changed, a new body, a new birth, is in effect obtained” (68). This call to

proteanize one's body and, by extension, the social and political order, was, as I have suggested, reinforced by the journal's serial publication, which, by regularly furnishing readers with new content, provided a ready example of the protean, ever-changing modern world.

The disciples of the vegetable diet represented vegetarianism as a "proteanization" of the body and self, linking it both to identity (those who practiced vegetarianism for rebirth saw it as central to their new lives) and to the movement's tactics for advocacy (the healthy vegetarian body was, as I have said, seen as the strongest argument). This representational strategy in turn meant that individual members occupied a central position in the vegetarian movement; they were called upon to narrate their new birth. As I want to now examine, their participation in the movement, particularly through their personal testimonies, served as the means of their subjection, or their formation into vegetarian subjects, and as evidence of vegetarianism. The dietary regimen produced a new body and self that then became an argument in favour of it.

### **Vegetarian Speech Acts**

According to Foucault, "Christianity is a confession," a religion that imposes upon its followers an obligation to speak the truth about themselves (*Politics* 170-71). By making salvation contingent upon confession, the Christian pastorate gave rise to an art of self-interpretation, which Foucault terms the hermeneutics of the self (*Politics* 166). This analytical practice, which first developed in monastic institutions, has, Foucault argues, developed into the most significant technique for governing subjects: "the confession became one of the West's most highly valued techniques for producing the truth. We have since become a singularly confessing society" (*History* 59). The confession, for Foucault, is a technology of subjection that works by demanding an exhaustive statement of truth that is interpreted by an external authority, the priest or doctor. However, uttering the truth does not set us free; rather, it binds us to ourselves. The subject comes to

recognize that which is unique about him or herself, and to care for his or her individuality, attending to its salvation (“Subject” 781; McGushin 212).

The VS, too, was a confessing society, a society that organized itself around ritualized productions of the truth and an interpretation of the body. The verbalization of the truth of oneself, assimilated from Christian and medical technologies of the self, was central to the experience of vegetarianism in the mid nineteenth century. The VS incorporated this “technique of the self” (*Politics* 169) into the practice of vegetarianism and the production of vegetarian subjects, using it as a mechanism to establish a pastoral, guiding relationship with new vegetarians. But, as I have also suggested, while the VS incorporated this pastoral technique into its repertoire, we can also read the society as a counter-pastoral movement. The vegetarian movement carried undeniably disciplinary implications: it wanted to change how others lived their lives, and it adopted the confession, a genre of pastoral power, as the means to create new vegetarians. But, at the same time, vegetarians also resisted the larger social and cultural forces that, Taylor argues, discipline subjects into specific eating habits and ways of relating to the body (73). Alongside the disciplining of human and nonhuman bodies within industrial capitalism, agricultural improvement, and mechanized food production, vegetarianism emerged as a form of counter-conduct through which practitioners sought to transform themselves and the way in which the self was constituted and conceptualized.

The emphasis on self-formation may have been tactical. As I suggested in the introduction, you cannot easily force someone to change his or her eating habits; the potential vegetarian must want to become a vegetarian and must ultimately come to identify as a vegetarian. Hence, rather than rely on moral duty, the VS presented its diet as a transformative practice, a technique through which one could re-claim the self. They wanted their members ultimately to see a fleshless diet not only as a moral obligation, a strategy of domestic management, or a rational economic choice, but as

an identity, something you became rather than did. The publication and circulation of personal testimonies in the correspondence pages of vegetarian journals were critical to this representational strategy: in these texts vegetarian readers narrated their personal transformations and identified themselves as vegetarians, claiming this name as their own. These public declarations of abstinence served to bind readers to their new vegetarian identities. Hence, I do not argue that vegetarianism was *anti*-pastoral; rather, I read it as counter-pastoral care. It relied on pastoral techniques at the same time that it resisted the norms of diet.

One became a vegetarian orally, by eating and speaking: entry into the VS required that one testify to a month's practice of abstinence from flesh, and make a declaration, in the presence of an established member:

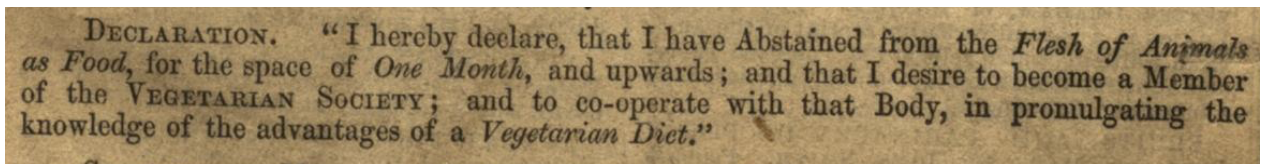


Figure 3.1: Declaration of the VS. Front cover, the *Vegetarian Messenger*, September 1849. *British Library*.

The performative act of declaring oneself a vegetarian demonstrates the complicity between agency and subjection,<sup>26</sup> or how agency comes at the cost of subjection; becoming a vegetarian subject required publicly declaring one's submission to the law of abstinence. This public discourse represented one of the principal mechanisms by which the VS brought its flock together. Vegetarians were called upon to declare their adherence to abstinence and to narrate their personal experience with the diet; they spoke the truth, not the truth about sexuality, which is Foucault's focus, but what they called the truth of vegetarianism; as John Smith argued at the VS's banquet in 1849, "[i]f Vegetarianism were a truth, that truth would in the end prevail,

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<sup>26</sup> "No individual becomes a subject without first becoming subjected or undergoing 'subjectivation' [...] Subjection is, literally, the *making* of a subject, the principle of regulation according to which a subject is formulated or produced" (Butler, *Psychic Life of Power*, 11, 84).

however its progress might be opposed at first” (*VM*, Sept 1849, 9). Eliciting from readers a statement about the truth of vegetarianism aided its progress but also invested them in the movement and bound them to their identity as vegetarians.

But, if vegetarianism was a confessional practice, it was also represented as a transformative practice of self-care, allowing readers to shape themselves. Indeed, the VS did not want to seem too prescriptive in its management of fledgling vegetarians. The founders of the VS participated in teetotalism, and they recognized that many of their potential recruits would also derive from the temperance community; however, while the VS developed along the model of a temperance society, it also differed from it, being wary of having its “declaration” of membership associated with the teetotal pledge. In the first annual report, the officers of the VS impressed upon members “the necessity of explaining to those interested in the vegetarian diet that the form of declaration is not in the nature of a ‘pledge’; but simply, a declaration of qualification attesting abstinence ‘*for one month, and upwards, from the flesh of animals*’” (“Report” 6). Qualification for membership required that one attest to his or her past abstinence, but not necessarily pledge future action. While the VS wanted active members, its officers worried that a formal pledge might imply too much commitment and deter the curious from joining the society’s ranks. At its foundation, the VS primarily needed to augment its numbers, living vegetarians who could testify to the months or years they had remained abstinent. The *Vegetarian Messenger*, resolving any misconceptions, laid out what membership entailed:

Others [...] no doubt object to cooperating with the members of the Society, under the erroneous impression, either that some ‘pledge’ is required as to the continuance of the practice, or that some code of opinions is a feature of co-operation; whereas, the slightest notice of the bond of union, recognized by the Society, shows, that the qualification of previous abstinence from flesh as food, and conviction of the usefulness of the Vegetarian system of living, together with the active desire to make known its advantages to the public, comprises every thing to which the individual, joining the Society, commits himself. It is thus that co-operation may be secured to the movement, by adhesion on the



part of everyone who, from any reason whatever, sees it good to carry out the Vegetarian system of living, the arguments pertaining to the practice of each—be there few or many—being left entirely to the perceptions and freedom of the individual. (*VM Vol. 4*, 1853, 52).

Notably, the journal disavowed the enforcement of any “code of opinion,” and instead asked simply for the recognition of a “bond of union” among members, a bond that was constructed and reiterated through the periodical press. Abstinance from flesh thus remained the only firm criteria for membership; the reasons one abstained were “left entirely to the perceptions and freedom of the individual” (52). The journal framed vegetarianism as a liberal practice of freedom rather than a law or a prohibition.<sup>27</sup> They wanted vegetarianism to be seen as voluntary self-government rather than bondage. Personal narratives of conversion, spoken at meetings and circulated through the press, were the primary genre through which individuals performed this freedom, learning to govern and shape themselves in new ways before new audiences.

The performative declaration of abstinance from flesh was thus only the first in a series of speech acts that vegetarian members were encouraged to make. After their admittance into the VS, members spoke of their experience at public meetings or privately to friends, composed testimonial letters for vegetarian journals, and submitted personal information to the society’s statistical surveys. Providing written or oral testimony of one’s life was not obligatory, but the correspondence columns of the *Vegetarian Advocate* and *Messenger* do offer some record of the everyday lives of members who chose to publicize themselves. The very titles of the journals, the *Vegetarian Advocate* and the *Vegetarian Messenger*, presented readers with new subjectivities for them to try on.<sup>28</sup> Readers were encouraged to see themselves as the advocates of vegetarianism and messengers of its gospel. For instance, in the supplement to the second issue of the *Vegetarian*

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<sup>27</sup> On liberalism as a practice of freedom, see Patrick Joyce, *The Rule of Freedom*.

<sup>28</sup> See Barbara Green on the formation of experimental subjectivities in the titles of periodicals.

*Messenger*, the editors published, nestled among recipes for Christmas dinner, a call for “truthful statements” by vegetarians on their trial of the practice:

EXPERIENCE OF VEGETARIANS—Nothing can so precisely express the value of vegetarian practice, and the confidence to be inspired by the experience of those who make a trial of it, as the truthful statement of cases within our knowledge. It will therefore be a pleasing part of our engagement, to supply facts of this nature, from time to time, as such shall present themselves. (*VM*, Dec 1849, “Supplement,” 2)

Maeve Adams argues that, despite the assumed objectivity of numbers, early statistical journals often resorted to narrative portraits to supplement their numerical data on society (105-09). The VS, in appealing for “truthful statements” (2), adopted this strategy: the narrative accounts supplied by individual vegetarians consolidated and concretized the social categories generated by the VS’s statistics. If its statistics represented the VS in abstract anonymity (the number of members, their years of abstinence, their occupations), personal testimonies provided particular, yet representative, cases of vegetarians who spoke as individuals and as synecdoches of the VS. The editors’ comments further indicate that these testimonies were not simply addressed to outsiders in order to “express the value of vegetarian practice” (2) and win over new converts. The testimony of vegetarians was also oriented internally to other members; sharing experiences forged the “bond of union” (*VM Vol. 4*, 1853, 52) among the vegetarian counter-public.

Directly below this appeal for “truthful statements of cases” (Dec 1849, “Supplement,” 2) the editors provided an example from a member identified only as J.S.J. Notably, the journal received his statement with the “statistical returns of the Vegetarian Society” (2), giving us an indication not only of the kind of information that the society requested from members in its surveys, but also of the close relationship between the VS’s numerical and narrative strategies. The VS primarily solicited information on members’ ages, professions, and genders, as well as their years of abstinence. As I have discussed, such statistical returns allowed the VS to know and guide its members; narrative testimonies expanded upon the society’s use of numbers to represent

itself, providing particular details on the lives of vegetarians while also turning their lives into “facts” (2). In J.S.J.’s testimony, for instance, he reported the usual statistical details (his age, his years of abstinence), but he also offered his life history as an endorsement of vegetarianism’s claims to health and strength (figure 4.2). Indeed, J.S.J. writes confidently (“I *know* what I pronounce upon”) in support of the argument that one must practice vegetarianism to understand it; projecting into the future, he promises that, if others try it, they “will find it characterized by greater endurance” (2):

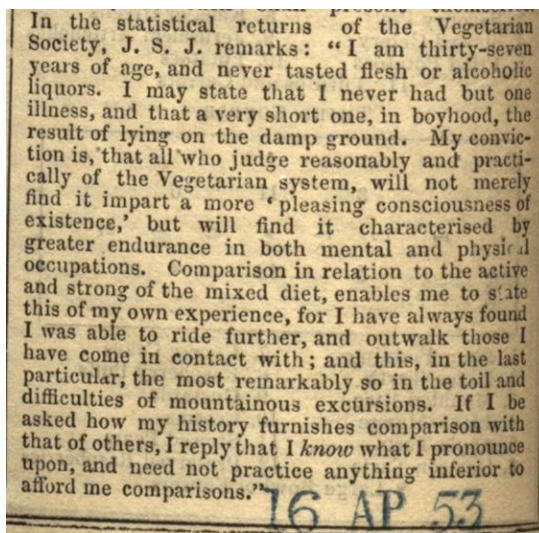


Figure 3.2: *Vegetarian Messenger*, Dec 1849, “Supplement,” 2. *British Library*.

What authorized J.S.J.’s pronouncements was his own experience; he presented himself as the ultimate source of knowledge on health. The rhetorical significance of such personal, experiential truth lay in the image of the self-sufficient, autonomous individual, who can labour without fatigue, and who does not rely on doctors, medicine, or other aid; this was the image of self-sufficient masculinity the VS wanted to project. Embedded on a page alongside recipes for stewed celery, fried potatoes, boiled beets, Jerusalem artichokes, and plum pudding, J.S.J.’s narrative presents us with the different print strategies that the journal used to shape the conduct of its members (see figure 3.3). While the recipes speak in the imperative, providing instructions for

**MACCARONI OMELET.**— $\frac{1}{4}$  oz. of macaroni; 3 oz. of bread-crumbs; 6 eggs;  $\frac{1}{2}$  table-spoonfuls of flour;  $\frac{1}{2}$  pint of milk; 2 small tea-spoonfuls of sage, and 1 oz. of parsley. Boil the macaroni till tender, and drain the water from it; rub the flour smooth in 3 table-spoonfuls of cold water; boil the milk, and pour it upon the flour, stirring it till it becomes thickened, and then add the macaroni, the herbs chopped small, the eggs well beaten, and season with pepper and salt. Bake the whole in a hot-buttered dish, in a moderately heated oven, until nicely browned. Serve it turned out of the dish, (after standing ten minutes,) with brown sauce and mint sauce.

**BUTTERED EGGS.**—7 eggs;  $\frac{1}{2}$  oz. of butter; and 1 oz. (2 table-spoonfuls,) of milk. Beat the eggs well, in a basin, add the milk, and season with pepper and salt. Melt the butter in another basin, placed in a pan of boiling water; then add the eggs, stirring them till they thicken, and then pouring them out on pieces of buttered toast placed in the bottom of a dish. The eggs should preserve their bright colour, and be as thick, only, as clotted cream.

**SAVOURY PIE.**—Cold Savoury Omelet, 3 boiled eggs; 2 table-spoonfuls of tapioca;  $\frac{1}{2}$  of a pint of cold water; 1 oz. of butter, and paste. Steep the tapioca in the water 10 or 15 minutes; cut the omelet in small pieces; butter a pie dish and spread a little of the tapioca over the bottom; then the omelet and eggs; then another layer of tapioca, adding seasoning and a few small pieces of butter; cover it with paste and bake it.

**POTATO PIE.**—2 lbs. of potatoes; 2 oz. of onions, (cut small); 1 oz. of butter; paste, and  $\frac{1}{2}$  an oz. of tapioca. Pare and cut the potatoes; season with pepper and salt; put them in a pie dish, adding the onion, tapioca, and a few pieces of butter on the top, and half a pint of water; cover it with paste and bake it in a moderately hot oven. A little celery or powdered sage may be added.

**HOT POT.**—Cut the potatoes, as for a potatoe pie, put them in a dish, in layers, with pepper, and salt between each layer, then put some butter on the top, adding a little water, and set it in the oven.

**STEWED CELERY.**—5 oz. of celery;  $\frac{1}{2}$  a pint of new milk;  $\frac{1}{2}$  an oz. of flour, and  $\frac{1}{2}$  of an oz. of butter. Cut the celery into pieces one inch in length, placing it in a pan, with as much milk as will cover it, and letting it boil gently, till tender. Drain it, seasoning with pepper and salt, thickening with the flour and butter, and then boiling the whole for a few minutes. Garnish with toast sippets.

**FRIED POTATOES.**—Pare and cut the potatoes into thin slices, as large as a crown piece, fry them brown in olive oil or butter, lay them on a dish, and sprinkle a little salt over them; or they may be dipped in batter and fried.

**BOILED BEET ROOT.**—Boil the root till quite soft, with much salt in the water, and a piece of carbonate soda, about the size of a pea; then cool it with cold water, pare it, and slice it thin, laying it together, in a dish, with vinegar poured over it some time previous to serving.

**JERUSALEM ARTICHOKE.**—Boil and serve with butter-sauce. (melted butter,) poured over them.

**PLUM PUDDING.**—1 pint basin of bread crumbs; 15 oz. of currants and Smyrna raisins, mixed in equal quantities; 11 oz. of moist sugar; 3 oz. of butter; 2 oz. of candied lemon; 8 eggs; 1 teacupful of apple-sauce, and half a teacupful of milk. Rub the butter into the bread crumbs, and add the fruit, sugar, candied lemon, and spice, beating the eggs with the whole. After standing 12 hours, mix the apple-sauce or the skimmed milk with it, and boil it in a buttered mould for 3 hours, letting it stand for some time in the water. Serve with cream or butter-sauce.

**MINCE TARTS.**—6 good sized lemons;  $\frac{1}{2}$  lb. of apples; 1 lb. of raisins, stoned; 1 lb. of currants; 1 lb. of sugar;  $\frac{1}{2}$  of a lb. of butter and paste. Squeeze out the juice of the lemons, scrape out the pulp and skins; boil the rinds till quite tender, changing the water 5 or 6 times, to take out the bitterness; chop them in a bowl with the apples and raisins; add the currants sugar, the juice of the lemons, the butter, melted and stir it up well with the other ingredients. To preserve: put the whole close down in a pot, and tie a paper over it, and keep in a dry cool place it will remain good 6 or 7 weeks. A little cayenne mace, and candied orange or lemon may be added if approved.

**CHEESECAKES.**—2 oz. of butter; 1 lb. of loaf sugar, broken; 6 eggs; 3 lemons; paste. Put the sugar, eggs (leaving out 2 whites), the rinds of two lemons, grated, the juice of 3 lemons, to the butter, in a brass pan, and simmer over the fire till the sugar becomes dissolved, and the whole begins to thicken like honey. It must be stirred all the time it is on the fire. To preserve: pour into jars and tie close, keeping in a dry place.

**MOULDED RICE.**—8 oz. of rice; and  $\frac{3}{4}$  pints of milk. Wash the rice, pour the milk upon it, and boil it slowly in a brown basin (covered,) in the oven, till it becomes tender and the milk absorbed; then put it into a mould, and cover it with a plate. Turn it out, (either warm or cold,) and serve it with preserves and cream.

**MOULDED SAGO.**—4 oz. of sago, and 1 quart of milk. Wash the sago and swell it thoroughly in the milk, pour it into a mould and let it stand for 12 hours; serve it with preserves and cream.

**BLANC-MANGE.**—One oz. of tapioca isinglass; 1 and a half pints of new milk; half a pint of cream, and 2 drops of almond flavour. Boil the milk and cream, and put in the isinglass, sweetening with sugar; boil this for 2 minutes, strain, whilst hot, through book muslin, adding the almond flavour when the milk is nearly cold, and pouring the whole into a mould, in which it should stand from 12 to 24 hours.

**BROWN SAUCE.**—2 oz. of Butter; and 1 oz. of flour. Melt the butter in a frying-pan or saucepan, and add the flour, stirring it till it is of a brown colour; and then adding as much boiling water to it, as will make it the thickness of thin cream; season with pepper and salt.

**EXPERIENCE OF VEGETARIANS.**—Nothing can so precisely express the value of Vegetarian practice, and the confidence to be inspired by the experience of those who make trial of it, as the truthful statement of cases within our knowledge. It will therefore be a pleasing part of our engagement, to supply facts of this nature, from time to time, as such shall present themselves. In the statistical returns of the Vegetarian Society, J. S. J. remarks: "I am thirty-seven years of age, and never tasted flesh or alcoholic liquors. I may state that I never had but one illness, and that a very short one, in boyhood, the result of lying on the damp ground. My conviction is, that all who judge reasonably and practically of the Vegetarian system, will not merely find it impart a more 'pleasing consciousness of existence,' but will find it characterised by greater endurance in both mental and physical occupations. Comparison in relation to the active and strong of the mixed diet, enables me to state this of my own experience, for I have always found I was able to ride further, and outwalk those I have come in contact with; and this, in the last particular, the most remarkably so in the toil and difficulties of mountainous excursions. If I be asked how my history furnishes comparison with that of others, I reply that I know what I pronounce upon, and need not practice anything inferior to afford me comparisons." 76 AP 53

Figure 3.3: *VM*, Dec 1849, "Supplement," 2. The testimony of J.S.J, titled the "EXPERIENCE OF VEGETARIANS," lies embedded among recipes for vegetarian dishes, juxtaposing the two ways in which the journal conducted readers and allowed them to conduct themselves. *British Library*.

how to carry out “the Vegetarian System,” J.S.J.’s statement demonstrates how the journal allowed readers to speak for themselves, to contribute to the emergent category of the vegetarian. The positioning of J.S.J.’s experience on the page, printed in the bottom right corner where the reader’s eye would conventionally fall last, presents it as the conclusion of the recipes. The implicit message of the page’s layout seems to be that eating these foods will produce this life.

In the 1840s, newspapers circulated advertisements for patent medicines, such as Holloway’s pills, that, like vegetarian journals, relied on testimonies; previous patients claimed that the doctor’s pills and ointments had cured their dyspepsia and other chronic ailments (figure 3.4). For Thomas Richards, these patent medicines signalled the commodity’s invasion of social and personal life; beginning with an analysis of the Great Exhibition, Richards argues that the Victorian period fell under the spell of a “new dominion of things” (73). Occupying a central position within this new commodity culture, patent medicines placed “consumers in a relation of dependency” (202) by equating “the making of the self with the consumption, not of food [...] but of commodities” (201). My suggestion here is that vegetarian publications offered one site of resistance to the lure of patent medicines and, more generally, to what Richard calls “the complete transformation of collective and private life into a space for the spectacular exhibition of commodities” (72). Vegetarian testimonies of health and vigour mirrored the content and visual language of advertisements, and they operated on the same territory as advertisers (they prescribed the care of the body in print media). But they also challenged the premise of advertising. J.S.J. and other vegetarians publicized their practice as a method for healing oneself *without* medical commodities and for achieving independence from the invasive dominion of things. For instance, John Parkyn, a correspondent to the *Vegetarian Advocate* (figure 3.5), claimed that “a pure and natural diet” had cured him of his “headache, costiveness, haemorrhoids, and blotches of the skins” (*VA*, Oct 1849, 23), mimicking the testimonial language of advertising at

the same time as he criticized its products: “I tried a great many quack prescriptions to remove the blotches and headache, without any permanent relief. This simple remedy, a pure and natural diet, has done wonders” (23). Parkyn thus rejected the “quack prescriptions” (23) that, Richards argues, turned the body into business. But, rather than see his advocacy of “a pure and natural diet” (23) simply as thrift or abstemious anti-consumerism, it is important to note the ways in which vegetarian journals appropriated the rhetoric and layout of commercial advertising. Indeed, the parallels in content and appearance between the advertising for Holloway’s pills (figure 3.4) and the narratives of vegetarian experience are undeniable: both articulated a narrative of salvation, of health lost and restored, both attributed their recovery to their object (pills or vegetarianism), and both were bound by the printing conventions of the 1840s and 50s. Un-illustrated, they appeared as single columns of type that had to be read rather than simply scanned or glanced at. Lacking visual imagery, they attracted attention through their headlines (“THE GREATEST CURES OF ANY MEDICINES IN THE GLOBE” and “THE BENEFITS OF VEGETARIANISM”) while their persuasiveness relied on the assumed authenticity of a private letter and its confessional discourse. Thus, although the vegetarian testimonies were not presented as advertisements or within the advertising section of journals, they still had the appearance and, in some sense, the objective, of advertising. We could perhaps describe the entire nineteenth-century vegetarian movement as a marketing campaign: it aimed to attract public attention the press, and influence how and what its audience consumed.

Indeed, advertising was the culture in which vegetarianism found itself embedded and in which it needed to compete for readers’ attention: for instance, a page from the *Manchester Times* on 29 July 1848 presented a report on the VS’s annual banquet alongside several advertisements for pills and ointments (Figure 3.6). On one side of the page, the journal quoted Brotherton on the invigorating properties of a vegetable diet, while on the other side it published advertisements

for “Parr’s Life Pills” and “Cockle’s Compound Antibilious Pills” which promised to alleviate digestion and restore health, if only readers would give the pills “a fair trial” (*Manchester Times*, 29 July 1848, 8). Hence, readers, picking up this newspaper, would confront multiple products for health against which the vegetarians would have to distinguish themselves. Having emerged from a teetotal Christian community, the VS sought to distance itself from what it considered to be the overconsumption of Victorian society, even as it embraced the statistical reasoning and representational strategies of the market. Through the pageantry of their annual banquets and public dinners, the early vegetarians created a spectacle of consumption, making everyday eating into a symbolic act. However, on display were the vegetarians themselves, not commodities. Vegetarian journals adopted the commercial language of the press, which would have been familiar to mid-Victorian readers, to sell readers not a commodity, but a way of life, a life independent of quack pills and medicine. By publicizing the experience of John Parkyn and J.S.J., vegetarian journals inspired others to take on the position of the independent, healthy vegetarian.

Through their adherence to, and performance of, simpler, purer, and healthier habits of diet, vegetarians displayed two divergent impulses: on the one hand, to demonstrate their separateness from general society, and, on the other, to intervene in and reform society. I describe their narratives as confessional because they enact a gesture of self-disclosure that, as Barbara Green theorizes, “grounds public debate in personal experiences” (Green 5). Yet the personal testimony of vegetarians was not a confession in the conventional sense of an admission of guilt. It was instead an affirmation of self-mastery. It did not, that is, assume the presence of an external authority who judged and validated the confessor’s utterance (Foucault 63). Instead, it inverted the power structure of the confession: the vegetarian’s testimony on his or her dietary experiment transformed the everyday eater into a medical authority who could challenge the quacks and guidance from others.

THE GREATEST CURES OF ANY MEDICINES  
IN THE GLOBE.

HOLLOWAY'S OINTMENT.  
A Very Wonderful Cure of a Disordered Liver  
and Stomach.

Extract of a Letter from Mr Charles Wilson, 30, Princes  
Street, Glasgow, dated February 16th, 1847.  
To Professor Holloway.

SIR,—Having taken your pills to remove a disease of  
the Stomach and Liver, under which I had long suffered,  
and having followed your printed instructions I have re-  
gained that health, which I had thought lost for ever. I  
had previously had recourse to several medical men,  
who are celebrated for their skill, but instead of curing  
my Complaint, it increased to a most alarming degree.  
Humanly speaking your pills have saved my life! Many  
tried to dissuade me from using them, and I doubt not but  
that hundreds are deterred from taking your most excel-  
lent medicine, in consequence of the impositions practised  
by many worthless wretches; but what a pity it is that  
the deceptions used by others, should be the means of pre-  
venting many unhappy persons, under disease, from re-  
gaining health, by the use of your pills. When I com-  
menced the use of your pills. I was in a most wretched  
condition, and to my great delight, in a few days after-  
wards, there was a considerable change for the better,  
and by continuing to use them for some weeks, I have  
been perfectly restored to health, to the surprise of all  
who have witnessed the state to which I had been re-  
duced by the disordered state of the Liver and Stomach;  
would to God that every poor sufferer would avail him-  
self of the same astonishing remedy.

(Signed) CHARLES WILSON.

\* \* \* The above gentleman has been a schoolmaster  
but is now in a highly respectable House, as Commercial  
Clerk.

Figure 3.4: Advertisement for Holloway's Pills, *The Northern Star*, 11 Dec 1847, 2.

THE BENEFITS OF VEGETARIANISM.

To the EDITOR of the VEGETARIAN ADVOCATE.

SIR,—Permit me to enumerate, through the medium of  
your widely circulated paper, a few of the many and im-  
portant advantages I have already experienced by an adop-  
tion of Vegetarian diet. Indeed, I have many and most  
cogent reasons for being truly thankful to the originators of  
this the only true system of dietetics.

I need scarcely enumerate all the reasons which have  
induced me to adopt the system; but they are neither few  
nor unimportant. Morally, and physically, even within my  
own personal observation, I can bear testimony to its bene-  
ficial influences; and when I look at the condition of those  
countries where flesh is a constant article of food, and com-  
pare them with those whose diet is strictly vegetable, I am  
irresistibly led to the same conclusion. But the most con-  
clusive reason I can adduce is the result of my own ex-  
perience. Last year I had an attack of the direful Epidemic  
that swept away so many around us. I, indeed, partially  
recovered, but for many months was far from well.  
During this time I successively tried the Hydropathic and  
Homœopathic systems, and admit having derived some  
benefit from both; but I continued even dangerously ill, and  
seriously believed I should not recover, until about three  
months since when, on the advice of a friend, (who had  
tried it and experienced its benefits,) I became a Vegetarian,  
did I enjoy anything like good health. I may add that I  
have likewise abandoned smoking, the use of any kind of  
intoxicating drinks, and stimulants of every kind; the  
result is, I am, in truth as it were, rescued from the grave;  
and I now enjoy the best possible health. I, therefore, feel  
bound for the sake of others, to let my case be known. I  
now devote the money, heretofore spent on these pernicious  
things, to the purchase of books and otherwise, towards the  
cultivation of my mind, until very recently much neglected.

I am, Sir, yours respectfully,

GEORGE PERKIN.

Bramley, May 12, 1850.

Correspondence.

VEGETARIAN EXPERIENCE.

To the EDITOR of the VEGETARIAN ADVOCATE.

DEAR SIR,—I commenced a Vegetarian Diet in August  
last (1848), since which I have not tasted the flesh of  
animals. In stature I am 5 feet 11 inches high, and stout  
in proportion, being about 12 stone and a half weight, I  
have been favoured with a tolerable share of good health.  
The only ailments I have ever been subject to are a slight  
headache, costiveness, hæmorrhoids, and blotches of the skin;  
but I am most happy to state, that since adopting the Vegeta-  
rian Diet, each of the above complaints has been considera-  
bly mitigated: in fact, the blotches and costiveness have not  
troubled me lately, and even the attacks of headache and  
piles are now so slight as scarcely to be worthy of notice. I  
tried a great many quack prescriptions to remove the  
blotches and head ache, without any permanent relief. This  
simple remedy, a pure and natural diet, has done wonders;  
and if I continue, which I hope I shall, [till death], in a  
short time each of the above will, no doubt, be entirely re-  
moved. I am glad to state I can perform my work with  
greater ease, and am more cheerful than when under the  
influence of a mixed diet; I seldom feel fatigued, and can  
stand either heat or cold much better; nor have I been so  
subject to colds, since adopting the Vegetarian practice.

I do not exactly know whether I am heavier now than I  
was 12 months since; but judging from the tight fitting of  
some of my clothes, I think I must have increased in bulk  
considerably. Having given you a slight outline of my ex-  
perience, I shall conclude by hoping our ranks will increase  
by thousands, and that the slaughtering of animals for food  
will soon be numbered with "the things that were;" and  
that the olive branch of peace will wave over our highly  
favoured country, and the world at large, when "Nation  
shall not lift sword against nation, or learn war any more."

I am yours, &c.,

JOHN PARKYN.

Ardwell, by Stranraer.

Figure 3.5: Correspondence, *VA*, June 1850, 128, and October 1849, 23. *Google Books*.



## THE VEGETARIAN SOCIETY.

## ANNUAL DINNER.

Last evening a large and most agreeable meeting was held at Hayward's Hotel, Bridge-street, being the first anniversary assemblage of the vegetarians of this district, or persons opposed to the eating and consequently killing of animals, or the exercise of any degree of cruelty to procure food. A company of nearly 200 persons were brought together under these circumstances, including a large proportion of ladies. Joseph Brotherton, Esq., M.P. for Salford, presided; and James Simpson, Esq., of Foxhill Bank, occupied the seat of vice-chairman. Amongst the gentlemen were Mr. Ald. Harvey and Mr. Ald. Tysoe (of Salford), Mr. Peter Gaskell (of Horwich), Mr. John West (of Latchford), Mr. Charles Townend, Mr. John Smith (of Malton), author of "Fruits and Famine," Mr. Robert Martin, Mr. Thomas Taylor, Mr. John Wright (Bolton), the Rev. James Scholefield, the Rev. J. B. Strettle, Mr. W. Horsell (Ramsgate), editor of the "Truth Teller," Mr. Rostron, Mr. John Thomases, Mr. George Holcroft, Mr. Wilson, Mr. Walker, Mr. Beach, Mr. Palmer, Mr. James Gaskell, Mr. John Alley, Mr. W. H. Barnesley, Mr. Furness, Mr. Hindley, Mr. Heginbotham, Mr. Hall, Mr. John Tysoe, Mr. C. T. Harvey, Mr. Neeson, Mr. George Contes, and Mr. Francis. Amongst the ladies we perceived Mrs. Brotherton, Mrs. Simpson, and Mrs. Simpson, sen. (of Foxhill Bank), Mrs. Hordern, Mrs. John Thomases, Mrs. Hall, Mrs. Jaques, Mrs. John Tysoe, Miss Brotherton, Miss Mary Robinson, Miss Sarah Hindley, and Miss Sybil Bell. The dinner, of course, consisted of vegetable productions, in the shape of fruit puddings, pies, jellies, custards, and other descriptions of choice confectionery; and the great portion of the culinary preparations had been volunteered by the ladies of the society.

## HEALTH, LONG LIFE, AND HAPPINESS SECURED BY THAT POPULAR MEDICINE

**PARR'S LIFE PILLS.**—No medicine yet offered to the world ever so rapidly attained such distinguished celebrity; it is questionable if there be now any part of the civilised globe where its extraordinary healing virtues have not been exhibited. This signal success is not attributable to any system of advertising, but solely to the strong recommendations of parties cured by their use. The proprietors of Parr's Life Pills have now in their possession upwards of *fifteen hundred letters*, several of them from *clergymen* of the Church of England, many from distinguished dissenting ministers, from gentlemen connected with the army and navy, also from members of parliament, merchants, and last, though not least, from the members of the medical profession, and a skilful analytical chemist, all speaking in the highest terms of the value of this inestimable medicine. This is a mass of evidence in its favour beyond all parallel.

The extraordinary properties of this medicine are thus described by an eminent physician, who says—"After particular observation of the action of Parr's Pills I am determined, in my opinion, that the following are their true properties—

"First—They increase the strength, whilst most other medicines have a weakening effect upon the system. Let any one take from three to four or six pills every twenty-four hours, and instead of having weakened they will be found to have revived the animal spirits, and to have imparted a lasting strength to the body.

"Secondly—In their operation they go direct to the disease. After you have taken six or twelve pills you will experience their effect; the disease upon you will become less and less by every dose you take, and if you persevere in regularly taking from three to six pills every day, your disease will speedily be entirely removed from the system.

"Thirdly—They are found, after giving them a fair trial for a few weeks, to possess the most astonishing and invigorating properties, and they will overcome all obstinate complaints, and restore sound health; there is a return of good appetite shortly from the beginning of their use, whilst their mildness as a purgative is a desideratum greatly required by the weak and delicate, particularly where violent purging is acknowledged to be injurious instead of beneficial.

Sold in boxes at 1s. 11d., 2s. 9d., and 11s. each, by **MOTTERSHEAD and ROBERTS**, Market Place, Manchester, and retail by one or more agents in every town in the kingdom.

Figure 3.6: A report on the VS's first annual banquet appeared on a page alongside advertisements for quack medicines, such as this one for "Parr's Pills." *Manchester Times*, 29 July 1848.

In this way, these testimonial narratives are similar to, yet distinct from, conversion narratives in the temperance movement. In the tales of drunkenness that were related at the meetings of temperance societies (Augst 298), teetotal converts confessed their sins and emphasized God's hand in their salvation. For example, the *Vegetarian Advocate*, which also appealed to a temperance audience, quoted a teetotal narrative from "a lovefest held in Leeds one Sunday" at which "a man got up and said, 'I have reason to thank God for teetotalism; it has been to me the leading strings to religion. I was once a notorious drunkard and an infidel; but now, thank God, I am a sober man and a Christian'" (Sept 1848, 30). Vegetarian conversion narratives, by contrast, did not attest to a past state of sin, but instead described a past state of physical ailment, and they attributed their salvation not to God but to vegetarianism—and, indeed, to

themselves; they emphasized the transformative effects of the diet and positioned themselves as the active managers of their own health.

The oft-repeated word, the “flesh,” in vegetarian literature carried both physiological and moral connotations, creating a link between the religious confession, which, as Foucault argues, spoke of the flesh (*History* 19), and the discourse of physiology and transmutation; it allowed them to speak a scientific discourse while retaining the imprint of confessional language, in which “the flesh” was the repository of sin. The vegetarians, through “Habits of Abstinence from the Flesh of Animals as Food” (*VM*, Sept 1849, front cover), were building a healthier, purer body, capable of resisting temptation and disease. Their personal testimonies of their flesh abstinence complemented the abstract scientific arguments on anatomy and chemistry: as Henry Clubb argued, “what is taught us by the anatomical structure of man is borne out by the results of physiological investigation and experience” (*VM*, Sept 1849, 22).

Vegetarians’ narratives of their physiological experience, which filled the correspondence pages of their journals, approach what Thomas Augst has described, in the context of the temperance movement as “a secular confession, a de-sacralization of moral knowledge that would help make personal experience central to the civic rituals and social practices of modern liberalism” (298). Grounding itself in personal experience, the vegetarian confession presented a challenge to orthodox authority, allowing “working men” to pronounce upon matters of health. For instance, in the July 1849 issue of the *Vegetarian Advocate*, a reader signed JP BIBBY (figure 3.7) wrote to the editors to provide what he called his “grateful testimony”:

since I became a vegetarian, I find I can do more work with less fatigue, and I can do with less sleep and rise more refreshed; besides which I feel more happy and comfortable in my mind. [...] Having joined the VS, I consider it my duty to God and man to do what I can in such a noble cause. [...] The more I examine and know of Vegetarianism, the greater is my pleasure; yea, my joy is unbounded. (*VA*, July 1849, 138)

This letter is not in itself remarkable: many readers wrote to express their gratitude to vegetarianism and their embodiment of it. The un-remarkability of the letter was perhaps the point: through autobiographical gestures, readers constructed a common experience and shared understanding of what it meant to be a vegetarian. As Barbara Green demonstrates, “the recognition of common experience” plays a critical role in “the formation of a public” (466). By accumulating their testimony together, and by sharing personal regimens, readers lent support to each other. Presented alongside other letters within the journal, individual narratives from distant parts of the country created the impression of a unified movement and public.

What I find interesting is not only the content of the letters, but also their inclusion of a numbered street address. As Patrick Joyce argues, the introduction of the Penny Post created a “system of cheap postal delivery [that] served to link names to addresses and residences in a way which depended on formal and impersonal systems of information” (22). For Joyce, the accelerated numbering of houses that followed the Penny Post individualized subjects, attaching house and person to a number; however, on the other hand, Joyce also suggests that the Penny Post made possible a new “collective political subject,” one that was tied not to locality but to the postal grid (22). For Joyce, these new forms of individual and collective subjectivity were implicated in the epistemology of governance, or the state’s knowledge of its subjects (22-23). Going back to Adams reading of the relationship between numbers and narratives, I want to suggest that vegetarian journals adopted a similar strategy to construct and represent its readers as individual subjects and as part of a collective. By publishing the names and street addresses of its correspondents, the *Vegetarian Advocate* identified readers as private subjects, representing them as names attached to private residences in a way that, according to Joyce, relied on the impersonal postal network. We have, for instance, Thomas Wright at 22 Swan Street, JP Bibby at 43 King Street, and Timothy Crompton 16 Hibbert Street (figures 3.7 and 3.8). Using the postal system to

attach names to numbers and identify these individuals added an air of facticity to vegetarian propaganda; the numbers implied that these were real people and real places. However, at the same time, their personal narratives worked against the very individuation, privacy, and abstraction named by this information system. The correspondents' self-cultivation in writing gave readers access to the intimate details of their lives, and represented the experience of discovering vegetarianism as a communal one: their tales of encountering opposition from society, of restoring health, and (to their minds) of validating the vegetable diet made "My Experience" (the title given to one letter) speak to the experience of others, and helped members of the VS imagine themselves as a corporate body, leading similar lives at their discrete residences. For instance, the narratives of Wright, Crompton, and Bibby (figures 3.7 and 3.8), as well as John Parkyn and George Perkin (figure 3.4), follow a similar arc: they express their pleasure in joining the VS, describe vegetarianism's effects on their lives, and conclude by stating their desire to further propagate it. The uniformity in their narratives created a standardized genre of vegetarian activism that different correspondents could take up and adapt to their own circumstances.

Correspondents were not prudish in the public self-revelations. In the first issue of the *Vegetarian Advocate*, one early correspondent, Mr. A.W. Evans, at 12, George Row, Bermondsey, contributed to the debate about flesh abstinence by providing "important facts" about "the experience of myself and my family, having been abstainers from the flesh of animals for eighteen months" (15 Sept 1848, 26). Evans gave a numbered list of eight effects of the diet; he claimed, for instance, that he felt far less fatigued on a vegetarian diet, that he had lost weight but gained in strength, and that no members of his family had fallen ill with influenza despite living in a congested metropolis. Furthermore, he and his family were immune from "bowel complaint" (26) even though they freely partook of seasonal fruit in the autumn. He concluded his letter by noting that although he was "a dyspeptic case from infancy" who had tried many remedies without

### MY EXPERIENCE.

To the Editor of the *Vegetarian Advocate*.

DEAR SIR,—I am glad to see so many names enrolled as Vegetarian members, and my wish is that they may all remain firm to the principles. I well remember when I commenced abstaining from the flesh of animals, the opposition I met with from my friends; and one argument which they used (and a very powerful one with them), was, 'that not having been brought up to a vegetable diet, I should lay a foundation for disease, which my constitution would sink under.' I was convinced of the inhumanity of destroying animals for food. I was satisfied that vegetable diet was productive of a life of innocence, and in agreement with the express commands of God as declared in holy writ, in the New as well as the Old Testament (whatever quibblers may say to the contrary); and more conducive to the interests of religion than the present vulgar and inhuman habits of Christian professors. Under this conviction, I determined to brook all opposition, knowing that if I erred I should err on the safe side. I have now tried the system nearly 11 years, and have enjoyed uninterrupted good health the whole of the time. I served an in-door apprenticeship under the system, and it is generally known the bodily labor and the call that is made upon the strength of grocers' apprentices. I know the labor I had to endure in my situation the whole time of my apprenticeship was a fair share, and I can bear my testimony to the fact that we are able to perform a greater amount of bodily labor under a vegetable system with less fatigue, than under the too common habits that are now adopted of partaking plentifully of animal food. Wishing the cause every success, I am, dear sir,

Yours respectfully,

THOS. WRIGHT.

22 Swan-street, Manchester.

### A GRATEFUL TESTIMONY.

To the Editor of the *Vegetarian Advocate*.

DEAR SIR,—I have great pleasure in returning my declaration of membership. I was in the enjoyment of good health when I commenced abstaining from the flesh of animals as food, and I thank God, it is still good; and since I became a Vegetarian, I find I can do more work with less fatigue, and I can do with less sleep and rise more refreshed; besides which I feel more happy and comfortable in my mind. When I became a Vegetarian, I also began to abstain from hot drinks, such as tea, coffee, etc.; so that I may say I have the honor to belong to the '*Nature's Beverage Society*.' My drink is from the spring, and I have been a teetotaler for the last seven months. Having joined the Vegetarian Society, I consider it my duty to God and man to do what I can in such a noble cause. It was the happiest day in my life when I met with the *Vegetarian Advocate*, which I am doing what I can to circulate, as well as the *Science of Human Life*.\* The more I examine and know of Vegetarianism, the greater is my pleasure; yea, my joy is unbounded.

I am, dear sir, your obedient servant,

J. P. BIBBY.

43, King street, Lancaster.

Figure 3.7: Wright's and Bibby's Correspondence, *VA*, 15 Jan 1849, 74 and 15 July 1849, 139. *Google Books*.

### EXPERIENCE OF A WORKING MAN.

To the Editor of the *Vegetarian Advocate*.

DEAR SIR,—In early life I had no relish for either flesh food or intoxicating drinks. I lived, nearly up to 20 years, a Vegetarian, without ever having heard of Vegetarian principles being advocated or practised by any one. At 17 years of age, I was quite a match for any flesh-eater that ever I met with. At that time I worked as collier or miner, sometimes a 'navigator.' These are all laborious callings. Many times, in the folly of youth, have I made a trial of strength against men who drank ale and ate flesh, but I never met with a rival.

Having shown you that at an early age, I was stronger than the generality of men, I must proceed to tell you that at the age of 20, I began to follow the example of other men, by taking animal food and intoxicating liquors. I indulged in these pernicious customs for 12 years, and I do assure you, so far as I am able to judge of myself, the more I indulged in them the weaker I became. Oh, if I could shew you how much worse a man I was at the end of these 12 years, and give you a calculation of all the money I have wasted in these unnecessary things, it would almost astound you!

In the year 1834, the teetotal principle found its way into the neighborhood where I then resided. After hearing the 'great delusion' of drinking intoxicating

I love the Vegetarian principle, because I believe it is founded in truth and in mercy, is conducive to health, and is economical. The man who adopts this principle and strictly adheres to it, is benefited in every sense of the word.

In conclusion allow me just to say, that notwithstanding all the sarcasm that the men of custom and appetite can pour upon me, I believe I am right in pursuing the course I have adopted. Some of my friends have already stated I was mad; others said I should not be able to follow my work for the length of time I have already abstained, and that I should soon be no more; but I am glad to state that I am in better health considerably than when I first adopted the Vegetarian system. This being the case, I intend to carry out our principles up to the very letter.

It gives me great pleasure to see that my example is worth something: there are two persons trying our system, one 7, and the other 14 years a teetotaler. I believe they will both be consistent Vegetarians. My intention is, now that I have proved the system to be right, to spread abroad its principles every where, when an opportunity shall offer itself, and to do all the good I can. Believe me to be yours truly,

TIMOTHY CROMPTON.

16 Hilbert Street, Hulme, Manchester, Nov. 1, 1848.

Figure 3.8: Timothy Crompton's Correspondence, *VA*, 15 Dec 1848, 65. *Google Books*.

success (allopathic, homeopathic, and hydropathic treatments), “[a]ll my symptoms have been considerable mitigated since I have become a vegetarian and some have entirely disappeared—that of flatulency, for instance” (26). The *Vegetarian Advocate* welcomed and encouraged these testimonials as evidence in favour of the diet and as models for readers to follow, but their publication also brought cohesion to the VS. Individual narratives, disseminated through the penny post and collected within the pages of the periodical, created fellowship and affective bonds between strangers, opening up possibilities for collective identification. They constituted what Michael Warner terms a counter-public, a network of strangers brought together through the circulation of texts (“Publics” 62).

Despite their claims to autonomy and self-sufficiency, readers’ letters often expressed a desire for belonging and community. One reader of the *Vegetarian Advocate*, James Goddard, who identified himself as an abstainer of twelve months, contributed a letter to the journal in which articulated his motive for joining the VS:

I take this opportunity of intimating to you the pleasure I felt in the discovery of the existence of your journal, and indeed of the society, as I was not, until very lately, aware of either [...] I should certainly have continued the Vegetarian system had I still remained in ignorance of your society; yet as my power of recommending the system to others might be increased by joining the association; considering that vegetarianism is a subject requiring great delicacy of judgment in advocating single handed, and that example is more powerful than precept; a society like yours is a place of refuge where the individual singularity is less liable to be construed into an ‘hallucination,’ monomania,’ ‘mental delusion,’ ‘fantasia’ or any other refined excuse which privileges one set of men to plague and torment and imprison another with impunity. I therefore should feel great pleasure in being considered a member of the society (*VA*, Feb 1849, 89).

Note here the transition from offensive to defensive orientations, from envisioning association as a means toward advocacy to envisioning it “as a place of refuge” (89). On the one hand, association would, Goddard suggested, give isolated vegetarians greater power to promote their system. On the other, it would protect idiosyncratic vegetarians from derision and social pressure,

preventing them from becoming subsumed by the currents of convention. Hence, while all social movements, regardless of their specific objectives, coalesce as a means for individuals to realize shared goals, Goddard suggested that organization was especially applicable to vegetarians because, by eating differently, they divorced themselves from the norms of society. Vegetarians, regarded as eccentrics in the nineteenth century, turned their lives into a spectacle, but also felt they were constantly subject to scrutiny, always being singled out to defend their practice. As a result, they often felt that isolation was their appointed lot. At the First Annual Banquet, the Rev. J.B. Strettles stated, “Man is a social being, and he is fond of company; [...] the cause must be important, great, and powerful, which can induce him to depart from the habits and customs of society, for in doing so he must to a great degree separate himself from the world” (“Report” 7). The vegetarians, therefore, had to create their own world. Another correspondent to the *Vegetarian Advocate*, who signed his name only as A.N., commented on his experience at one of the Society’s banquets in London: “It is in such assemblages as these that man feels he is a social being—that he is assimilated to his fellow man—made to taste the same pleasures, and aspire to the same noble ends” (*VA* Feb 1849, 89).<sup>29</sup> As A.N.’s letter suggests, the social dinners and banquets of the VS produced a feeling of sameness and correspondence among its attendees. Hence, while the instrumental goal of the VS was to advocate abstinence from flesh, the society was also an end in itself; it created a space for vegetarians to fashion their own habits and tastes, and shelter a new identity, which could then be communicated to others.

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<sup>29</sup> A.N. went on to anticipate his attendance at the next banquet, revealing interesting details about the entertainment: “And when Mr. and Mrs. Hurlstone light up their halls again; when they spread the rich banquet of nature’s best gifts, presented by him who said, ‘the tree bearing fruit, this shall be your meat,’—‘may I be there to see;’ and when the fingers of the unassuming German lady shall again softly touch the guitar, may I be there to hear!” (*VA* Feb 1849, 89). Who, one wonders, was this unassuming German guitarist?

As I have suggested, the personal confessions of vegetarians, whether spoken at meetings or circulated through the press, represented a significant genre through which vegetarians began to carve out their shared motives, desires, tastes, and experiences. Perhaps most importantly for my argument on pastoral power, eliciting a statement of truth from readers about themselves also bound them to this truth and to the vegetarian identity it expressed. Allow me to quote from another letter, this one contributed by a man named George Perkyn (figure 3.4). Perkyn wrote to the editors of the *Advocate* on the benefits of his practice:

Permit me to enumerate, through the medium of your widely circulated paper, a few of the many important advantages I have already experienced by an adoption of [a] Vegetarian diet. Indeed, I have many and most cogent reasons for being truly thankful to the originators of this, the only true system of dietetics [...] the result is, I am, in truth as it were, rescued from the grave; and I now enjoy the best possible health. I therefore feel bound for the sake of others to let my case be known (June 1850, 128).

I want to emphasize Perkyn's sense of being, as he says, bound to let his case be known to others. Vegetarians, who professed the value of humility, often claimed that while they did not like to talk about themselves, they felt obligated to speak up. For example, the *Vegetarian Advocate* reported that Mr. Payne of Colchester, speaking as chairman at a vegetarian dinner in Hadleigh, told his audience, "He did not like to speak so much about himself, but he felt bound to say he could think better, talk better, and work better, than he could before" (July 1849, 140). Like Perkyn, Payne felt bound to speak in favour of vegetarianism largely because the vegetable regimen had restored him to health. Addressing the public audience that came to observe the dinner, Payne reportedly explained,

His own experience enabled him to speak positively as to the benefits of the Vegetarian Principle. For 30 years of his life he had not known what it was to be entirely free from the consequences of indigestion, but having been led to the adoption of this system, those unpleasant symptoms of sickness and headache immediately left him, and he had enjoyed excellent health ever since, which was a period of about nine months.—(Applause). (*VA*, July 1849, 140)



Payne here claims quite clearly that his experience as a vegetarian enabled him to speak; vegetarianism enabled his speech, authority, health, and being. Hence, on the one hand, vegetarians such as Payne expressed their indebtedness to the diet for having saved them and for shaping them into temperate, robust men. Yet, on the other hand, they positioned themselves as ones embodying and proving the truth of vegetarianism. These writers and speakers emphasized their own agency and individual contributions to the cause, publicly declaring their adherence to vegetarianism. As Thomas Wright wrote, “I can bear my testimony to the fact that we are able to perform a greater amount of bodily labor under a vegetable system with less fatigue” (*VA*, Jan. 1849, 74). Crompton added, “My intention is, now that I have proved the system to be right, to spread its principles everywhere, when an opportunity shall offer itself, and to do all the good I can” (*VA*, Dec 1848, 65). *I have proved the system to be right. I can bear my testimony.* By proving vegetarianism as the most healthful way of living, individuals like Thomas Wright and Timothy Crompton asserted their agency and bound themselves to this way of living and the vegetarian identity they helped construct. The VS created vegetarians not by enforcing a pledge of abstinence, but by opening up avenues for participation in the vegetarian movement, and by creating venues for members to cultivate themselves in speech and writing. The publication of their letters or lectures gave them the opportunity to see their own dietary experiments, their own words, and their own lives reflected in the print, affirming their agency. As Crompton writes, “It gives me great pleasure to see that my example is worth something” (65), suggesting that “the pleasure” derives not only from contributing to the movement, but from *seeing* himself as a contributor and example.

Hence, for the VS’s officers, print and the post represented an effective means to circulate vegetarian testimonies and construct a model of vegetarian practice, a reproducible narrative of health and strength restored. However, readers were not passive in their education: through their

personal discourses, the consumers of vegetarian propaganda became the producers of vegetarianism. They were integral to the invention of everyday vegetarian life and to the rhetorical weight of the vegetarian movement. A reciprocal relationship developed between the leaders of the VS and the everyday practitioners of the diet. The officers and lecturers of the VS articulated its principles and constructed its dietary tables, but private individuals embodied it, brought it into being, and modified it through their daily practice. The VS disseminated information on the diet and tried to control its reception, but it depended, vitally, on the lives of its members and practitioners. The periodical staged and fostered this dialogue between the way in which vegetarianism was defined, defended, and advocated and the way in which it was practiced. Conversion to vegetarianism began with the rational study of its principles, but, as vegetarians frequently stressed, one could understand the “truth” of vegetarianism only by personally practicing it. The participatory nature of the periodical was thus critical to the formation of vegetarian subjects. It allowed the dissemination of vegetarianism to focus on the proliferation of agency rather than on the disciplining of desires.

## Part 2. Vegetarian Interventions in the Press: Sensation and Seriality.

### Introduction: The *Vegetarian Messenger* in the 1860s

The 1860s began as a fallow, transitional period for the VS. Its first president and principal benefactor, James Simpson, passed away in 1859, leaving the society financially unstable (Axon 4). With a dwindling membership, the VS needed to develop new tactics to publicize itself and gain recruits. In January 1861, the organization's monthly journal, the *Vegetarian Messenger*, introduced itself as a "new periodical" (January 1861, 1), now issued as a quarterly under the title of the *Dietetic Reformer and Vegetarian Messenger*. Shifting to quarterly publication, at a time when the repeal of newspaper taxes made cheap monthlies the popular format, can only be taken as a sign of decline, one caused by the loss of Simpson's financial support.<sup>30</sup> On the front cover, the new title, THE DIETETIC REFORMER, appeared in larger, capitalized font above the original, *Vegetarian Messenger*, indicating that, at this point in the society's history, members may not have felt the same confidence in exhibiting the word "vegetarian" on their masthead (see figure 4.1). Vegetarianism, and vegetarians themselves, had, by 1861, developed a reputation for eccentricity; the phrase, *dietary reform*, allied their cause with other reform movements. In particular, the emphasis on *dietetics* associated their cause with emerging sciences and the scientific inquiry into the health and diet of the population.<sup>31</sup> Adopting the broader title, *Dietetic Reformer*, appears to have been part of a strategy to expand the journal's readership by including content that would appeal to a wider audience of reformers.

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<sup>30</sup> I give a fuller account the VS's decline and revival in chapter five on Francis William Newman.

<sup>31</sup> The *Dietetic Reformer*, for instance, devoted much of its space to documenting Dr. Edward Smith's investigation in 1863 of the diets of labourers. Dr. Smith's analysis was the first survey of diet in Britain (Burnett 159). The vegetarians used his work to point out that the labourers of Scotland and Ireland, whose diet included more oatmeal, milk, potatoes, and garden vegetables than their English peers, who consumed white bread, tea, and meat, were better fed and received more nutrition.

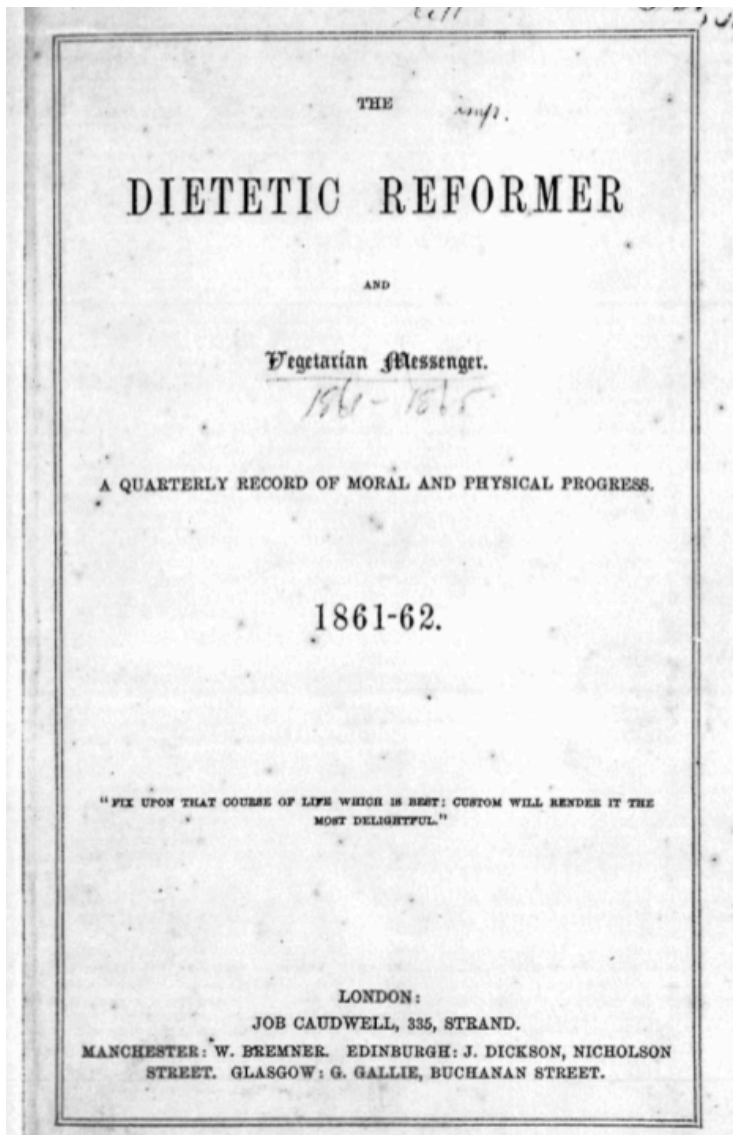


Figure 4.1: Front Cover of the *Dietetic Reformer and Vegetarian Messenger*. “DIETETIC REFORMER” appears in much larger, more visible type than *Vegetarian Messenger*. *Vegetarian Society Archives*.

The “primary objective” of the new quarterly was, as the first issue stated, “to advocate the adoption of a more healthful, a more economical, and humane system” (January 1861, 1), not an explicitly “vegetarian” system. Further, in the prospectus to the first issue of the *Dietetic Reformer*, the editors emphasized that, although their “new Quarterly” remained “the organ of the Vegetarian Society,” the journal would also “treat of more general questions” (1), such as “the cause of sanitary reform” and other “measures which have a bearing on human progress” (1). The

promotion of flesh abstinence still remained the over-arching goal of the journal, but the editors were also keen to develop “our relation to the public, to whom we appeal for support” (1). Integrating “more general questions” (1) of social and moral progress thus aimed to attract the interest of a wider audience of reform-minded readers.

But, in doing so, the editors had to strike a balance between communicating to vegetarians and communicating to the public. As Brian Harrison notes, pressure-group periodicals were often caught between the need to enlighten the uninitiated, with the aim of making new converts to the cause, and the need to encourage existing members and activists. Content that interested the initiated—such as reports on the group’s meetings, finances, lectures, and publications—would seem opaque to the newcomer and general public. Conversely, if a periodical attempted to broaden its audience by diversifying its content, it risked alienating its base (Harrison 284-85). The prospectus to *Dietetic Reformer* described how it would navigate these dual modes of address:

The new Quarterly, being the organ of the VEGETARIAN SOCIETY, and thus supported by all vegetarians, will become a medium of communication with the members; whilst, at the same time, its advocacy and discussion of the question will render it an expositor of correct dietetic principles (Jan 1861, 1).

As the organ of the VS, the *Dietetic Reformer* still worked to form the collective identity, practices, and tastes of vegetarians, but the journal also had to communicate its principles to outsiders, developing what Diczynski, Delap, and Ryan term the “publicist orientation” of social movement media (56). Appealing to audiences both within and without the VS became a critical objective. Couching vegetarianism in the terminology of “dietetic reform” and “correct dietetic principles” offered one way of introducing new audiences to flesh abstinence.

This section examines the representational strategies and tactics that the VS developed to publicize its cause. Despite being supported, as it professed, by modern science, moral conviction, and the testimony of ages, the VS throughout the nineteenth century faced the problem not only

of making converts, but of alerting outsiders to its very existence: in 1875 the editors of the *Dietetic Reformer* told readers, “How to become known—how to remove the misfortune of being misknown [...] are questions which have been properly raised” (Aug. 1875, 239). While the *Dietetic Reformer* functioned as the primary medium for its propaganda, interventions into the popular press offered another means to address outsiders. The general press, that is, helped the society manage the multiple modes of address required of a social movement, allowing the VS to reach audiences inside and outside the movement.

The participation of members were regarded as critical to this project. The editors of the vegetarian journal constantly reminded readers of the importance of writing to local and national papers. One of the professed aims of the VS was to “recommend our readers to become writers” (*DR*, Dec. 1873, 350). With the expansion of newspapers, readers were encouraged to contribute to their local papers, write letters to editors, and generate discussions on the nation’s diet. For instance, the January 1883 *Dietetic Reformer* called upon readers to write letters to their local papers: “We invite every reader of ours who wields the pen of the ‘ready writer’ to neglect no public opportunity of communicating such facts to organs of the local and general press” (*D.R.* January 1883, 7). The VS invited its readers to become writers, a tactic that took advantage of the participatory framework of the periodical press. With the growth of periodical publishing it became a natural assumption that “a discussion in the newspapers” would generate a similar conversation “in the parlours and kitchens of the newspaper-reading community” (*DR*, Sept. 1873, 313). The VS mobilized the widespread habituation of newspaper reading as a means to cultivate new daily habits in the kitchen. A discussion of vegetarianism in the press helped reach outsiders who may never have attended a meeting or lecture on dietary reform, but it also served to engage the participation and agency of existing vegetarians.

Through a series of case studies, this section examines the ongoing and shifting dialogue between the vegetarian press and the general press on food, health, diet, and the lives of human and nonhuman animals. It attends to the way in which the nineteenth-century periodical press provided a forum for debate on the question of what to eat, and it demonstrates the crucial role that the press played in framing and communicating conflicting tastes and practices. The aim is to demonstrate that the press became an object and tactic in itself. Rather than serve only as a medium of information, the press enabled, yet also constrained and shaped, the content and tactics of vegetarian advocacy.

Chapter four in this section demonstrates how vegetarians situated their arguments within the larger conversation on the food supply of England, a conversation that circulated around Malthusian fears of overpopulation, and the moral and logistical problems posed by an unregulated market in food. As Richard Perren notes, the domestic production of meat, despite improvements in fattening and transportation, could not keep pace with demand in the second half of the nineteenth century, and anxiety over the food supply developed into a pressing concern (3-4, 81). Thus, vegetarianism could present itself as a seemingly legitimate response to the nation's dietary problems, yet it was rarely discussed as such. Two developments in the history of English food helped shift the position of the vegetarian diet from an object of ridicule to a potentially credible alternative: the shortage of meat in the second half of the nineteenth century, and the arrival of the cattle plague in 1865 (Perren, *Taste*, 8; Burnett 131-33). By the mid-century, England could no longer feed itself and relied on foreign imports (Burnett 130). A paradox and contradiction emerged at the heart of the English national identity: beef was central to English masculinity, a sign of social and economic status; so too was the operation of the free market; both, however, were not only fraudulent but a direct threat to the health of the social body. This chapter examines the inherent contradictions and dangers in eating other animals, and it analyzes

the vegetarians' tactical interventions into the general press: while the nation was still coming to terms with pervasive fraud and adultery in its markets and shops, the press began to report on the sale of diseased meat and the outbreak of contagious diseases among livestock, provoking a panic that the vegetarians sought to exploit. In this chapter, I thus demonstrate how “encounters in the press”—which Brake and Codell define as dialogue “among and between readers, editors, and authors” (Brake and Codell 1)—turned vegetarian readers into active participants in and contributors to public debates and the content of journalism. Debates over the sanitary conditions of the meat trade and the arrival of new contagious diseases (trichinosis and *Rinderpest* or Cattle Plague) crystallized the public mind around the safety of food and, in turn, brought much needed publicity to the VS.

Chapter five details the effect of this diseased meat scandal on the revival of vegetarianism in the 1870s. If, as I will suggest, the cattle plague gave vegetarianism a new foothold in the public sphere, it also gave vegetarianism one of its strongest and most famous advocates in Francis William Newman, a well-known public intellectual. Compelled by the outbreak of the cattle plague, Francis William Newman joined the vegetarian movement in 1868. Elected president in 1873, he transformed the structure, organization, and membership of the VS, modeling it on the concept and material practice of serialization in the press. Newman, I detail, made possible the revival of vegetarianism after its years of decline. Chapter six in this section examines the contributions of Beatrice Lindsay to the vegetarian movement, arguing that she appropriated the tactics of commercial journalism to popularize vegetarian foods.



#### 4. Humane Sentiment or Horrifying Sensation? Cattle Plague and Trichinosis in Vegetarian Advocacy

In April 1866, amid the outbreak of cattle plague, the *Dietetic Reformer and Vegetarian Messenger* issued a stern warning to consumers of beef and pork, implying that these cherished foods were carriers of zoonotic, or species-crossing, disease:

those who feed upon these animals can hardly hope to escape contagion. Certainly they run a fearful risk since the flesh of thousands of plague-stricken cattle finds its way to the public shambles for sale. This is no fiction, but a certain fact that cannot be doubted. The evidence of this fact keeps cropping up in various ways, even in the general public press, careless as that press is in regard to the most vital considerations connected with the great question of human health as affected by diet (*DR*, April 1866, 44).

Despite their scepticism toward the “careless” public press, vegetarian advocates depended on the “certain,” yet disconcerting, facts that were reported in its pages. During the 1860s, with the prevalence of livestock disease, the VS’s tactics shifted toward a more sensational brand of journalism, which relied on mimicking and extracting the content of the daily news. Many of the characteristics for which the popular press was disparaged at the time—its commercialism and its sensationalism—aided the vegetarians’ efforts to participate in the national conversation on food. The VS published books and pamphlets, as well as its own official organ, but the panic over the food supply in the general press created an opportunity to address a larger audience. Indeed, VS worked hard to address “the newspaper-reading community” (*DR*, Sept. 1873, 313), one habituated to accepting the newspaper as a guide to social questions. As such, vegetarian periodicals developed an almost parasitic relationship to the news, feeding off and repurposing its content. As I discuss in this chapter, the vegetarians appropriated the increasing authority, omnipresence, and sensationalism of newspapers in the 1860s to compel attention and make their movement appear relevant to national interests. As I want to suggest, the spread of epizootic diseases, and the proliferation of newspapers that reported on them, were not unrelated: free

trade, communication, and mobility, all of which newspapers reflected and represented, helped bring communicable diseases to England's shores.

Mark Hampton describes how views of the press in the second half of the nineteenth century shifted from an educational ideal, which emphasized publishing opinions and arguments, to a representative ideal, which emphasized the presentation of facts (9-10, 50, 62). The educational ideal reflected mid-Victorian values of open debate, and it posited an active readership capable of participating in the discussion (69). The representative ideal, by contrast, implied a passive readership: it represented readers' interests on their behalf, or it informed them with an accurate record of events, but it did not seek to persuade or engage readers (106-7). It traded in facts, not arguments. Although they overlapped and circulated concurrently, the representative ideal became more dominant with the commercialization of the press and the "new journalism" of the later nineteenth century: facts could be printed and distributed much faster than long editorial opinions, and they had an immediate impact on the mind of the reader, who did not have to digest a complex argument. However, as Hampton argues, we also need to see the emphasis on facts within the context of professionalization and the rising cultural authority of the sciences: journalists accrued professional credibility by displaying "a command of the facts," and the newspaper presented itself as objective record of social reality (76-78). The factual basis of the newspaper often derived from the work of scientists, who were similarly trying to define themselves as a professional body (Lightman 12). Readers, relying on the authority of elite scientists, became passive consumers of information, not participants in a dialogue. Following Hampton and historians of science, I focus on how vegetarian food reformers appropriated this authoritative discourse in the press, quoting and abstracting scientific investigations of diseased cattle and infectious parasites. Advances in technology, such as the microscope, and developments in mass communication, particularly the railway and periodical press, enabled and

compelled vegetarian concerns to come to the fore of public debates on food. The microscope and the daily news shared a common goal: the creation of a new reality based on revealing hidden facts about the world. Microscopes' revelations of adulterated food and imperceptible parasites created a national conversation in the press on food, and lent new relevance to vegetarianism. But vegetarian practices of extraction and citation were not always honest or accurate; rather, they relied on the Derridean point that a text or speech act, when cited and removed from its original context, can be given new meaning not envisioned by the author (Derrida, "Signature," 1-23).

The founders of the VS initially embraced the mid-century educational ideal of rational persuasion and public debate, and they appealed to the public language of rationality, morality, and economics. The aim was to craft a positive argument, one that relied not on slandering the opposition but on demonstrating the inherent desirability and purity of vegetarianism. However, rational calculations only go so far in determining our appetites, and vegetarians recognized that their propaganda had to stimulate not only the mind, but also the body. The regulation of private, personal emotions (such as disgust, fear, and revulsion) offered a supplementary, extra-rational mechanism for shaping the conduct and eating habits of others. In the 1860s members of the VS, such as Francis Newman, continued to make logical arguments in favour of vegetarianism—based on the diet's health or economy—but its journal also began to include more aesthetic arguments<sup>32</sup> that stressed the purity of a vegetarian diet and the ugliness of meat, arguments that relied on the very irrational appetites and affects that vegetarians regarded as their antagonists in their campaign to educate the palates of the nation. With their organization's decline in the 1860s, vegetarian advocates needed new strategies to keep their cause in the public sphere; instead of trying to lead the conversation on diet, they increasingly responded to developments in the popular press. Capitalizing on its sensationalism and the growing sense of a food crisis, the *Dietetic Reformer* in the

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<sup>32</sup> On aesthetic arguments for vegetarianism, see Chloe Taylor.

1860s began publishing clippings of diseased meat sales, and reports of contagious outbreaks (*rinderpest* in cattle, trichinosis in pigs). Initially, the editors apologized for admitting this subject into their journal, as though consuming it in print were as bad as eating it. They intended vegetarian reading, like vegetarian eating, to be edifying, but press reports and editorial commentary on infected meat and contagious diseases soon became a staple of the journal. Before they returned to the diet of Eden, the vegetarians would have to wallow in the filth of the pigpen.

One can propose several historical reasons for this shift in tactics: the popularity and influence of sensation novels; the expansion of newspapers and widespread reporting on adulterated food and epizootic diseases; and the fear of infection that led to the passage of the Contagious Diseases Acts in 1864, 1866, and 1868 (Walkowitz, *City*, 22-23). The 1860s were, as Patrick Brantlinger argues, the decade of the sensation novel, a genre that derived historically from the decade's "sensational journalism" and the proliferation of cheap dailies in London and the provinces (149). Indeed, the sensation novel became known as the "Newspaper Novel" because it made "fictions out of the stuff that filled newspapers every day" (147). Driven by new printing technologies, telegraphy, and the mobility of the railways, the news and newspapers became "a regular feature of everyday life" (149), but their discourse of newsy "facts" did not always appeal to reason or logical argumentation. Although the repeal of the "taxes on knowledge" between 1853 and 1861 brought about a dramatic expansion of the newspapers, it did not usher in an age of rational conversation or public debate, as social reformers had hoped (Harrison 270). Instead, the news reported on murders, crimes, and scandals (Brantlinger 149), which nineteenth-century commentators and contemporary scholars have interpreted as symptomatic of the decline of the public sphere. I suggest that this sensational journalism and the moral panic it created aided the vegetarians' interventions into the biopolitics of their time.

To make this case, I follow Judith Walkowitz's argument, from her classic study *City of Dreadful Delight*, that media scandals mobilized new social actors in the Victorian period. Where Walkowitz addresses the Contagious Diseases Acts and the figure of the prostitute, a lower-class woman who threatened to bring contagion into respectable homes, I focus on the scandal of contagious diseases among animals, which similarly threatened the interior of respectable homes. The panic over diseased meat and the spread of infection from foreign animals brought vegetarian claims into the public sphere. Fears over contamination in the 1860s (emanating from the lower classes, public women, and, indeed, diseased, unhealthy animals) gave rise to the social purity movement as well as the demand for "purer food" (Burnett 251), which aided the efforts of vegetarians who emphasized the purity of their "natural" diet. In the face of ineffective legislation on the importation of cattle, they presented vegetarianism as a practice of liberal self-government, or as personal self-regulation that did not interfere with the free working of the economy, but still immunized eaters from uncertain threats.

Like sensation novels, vegetarian advocacy closely followed and relied on the content newspapers; more importantly, vegetarian propaganda also mirrored the tactics of the sensation novel. Brantlinger offers a succinct account of what sensation novels do: they punctuate everyday reality with question marks. By "stripping away surface appearances, [and] the stuff of quotidian experience" (144), sensation novels revealed the crimes, scandals, and sexual desires that lurked within "apparently proper, bourgeois, domestic settings" (145). They multiplied secrecy and implied that one could not trust everyday life or one's own perception of reality; instead, one had to rely on the gaze and interpretation of the "super-reader" (146) or detective, a stock character of sensation fiction. As Brantlinger writes, "[m]urderers and conspiracies do not lurk down every dark street, in the shadows of every dark house. Or do they?" (151). Vegetarian advocates similarly wanted to raise troubling questions about everyday life; however, whereas Brantlinger

focuses on sexual desire within bourgeois domesticity, vegetarians defamiliarized a seemingly more mundane, but not any less important, object in middleclass life: butcher's meat. If the 1860s were the decade of sensation novels, they were also the decade of epizootic disease, which newspapers reported on in sensational terms. As the quotation with which I began this section implies, vegetarians drew upon the "certain facts" and "evidence" (*DR*, April 1866, 44) of science and the daily press not to establish a sense of certainty or objectivity, but a feeling of fearful and uncertain risk. They aimed to unsettle the routine ritual of eating, and estrange readers from their habitual perceptions of, and desires for, animal meat. Amid the general panic over the cattle plague in 1866, the *Dietetic Reformer* asked, "[w]ill *this* plague be accompanied or followed by a corresponding plague amongst men?" (April 1866, 45). There was little evidence that the cattle plague was communicable to humans through the consumption of tainted beef, but that did not stop the vegetarians from punctuating the conversation on food with this question, hoping that they might cause others to look at their everyday dinner with new fear and mistrust.

Precipitated by free trade and rising demand for meat, the outbreak of epizootic diseases in England, particularly cattle plague in 1865, represents an early instance of what Nicole Shukin theorizes as "biomobility" (182). Analysing the panic over avian flu in the twenty-first century, Shukin describes "biomobility" as the pathological and biological "underbelly" of telecommunication and globalization, or what she terms "telemobility":

If telemobility traffics in the promise of a "painless transmission" of affect through seemingly ethereal global networks, with biomobility the *substance* of virtual communication reappears in the pandemic potential of communicable disease. Biomobility names, in other words, the threat of telecommunications' pathological double, the potential of infectious disease to rapidly travel through the social flesh of a globally connected life world. (182)

As I want to suggest, the outbreaks of cattle plague and other animal-borne pathogens, such as trichinae, represent the "pathological double" of free trade and mass communication: the mid-

century's *laissez-faire* policies created the conditions for the communication of the disease to England, and made possible the communication of the disease's "affects" (fear, disgust, panic) throughout the press and the social body. The outbreak of cattle plague in the mid-1860s revealed, for those observing it unfold, the contingency and contiguity of the human "social flesh" (182) with animal flesh. Shukin speaks of post-modern globalization and telecommunication, but in the nineteenth century the dissolution of tariffs under liberalized economic policies and the rapid movement of animals across borders on steamships and trains had a similarly subversive side effect of dissolving the imagined boundaries between species.<sup>33</sup> The irony of the cattle plague and other animal diseases was that the very symbols and mechanisms of England's power and modernity—railways, laissez-faire economics, daily newspapers, telegraphy, and, importantly, the increasing consumption of meat that accompanied rising standards of living—are what made it vulnerable and opened it up to contagion.

### **Contagious Diseases: (Women) and (Animals)**

It is difficult to discuss contagious diseases in cattle in the 1860s without discussing the contemporaneous Contagious Diseases Acts of that decade, especially when we consider that the US joined the campaign to repeal the C.D. Acts while it also adopted the rhetoric of social purity for its own campaign of food reform. Initially justified as a measure of national defence, the C.D. Acts gave the police and doctors the power to incarcerate women suspected of being "common prostitutes" in military towns in southern England and Ireland (Walkowitz, *Prostitution*, 71-3). As Walkowitz argues, the C.D. Acts were "informed by a fear of contagion and were part of the legal, institutional, and sanitary network that segregated and rationalized the treatment of the socially deviant" ("Beasts," 75). Yet, while the House of Commons swiftly passed the first C.D. Act in

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<sup>33</sup> Shukin argues, "[m]ore than economic and cultural boundaries are volatilized in an era of globalization; so are material and imaginary boundaries between species" (183).

1864, that same year it failed to pass the proposed Cattle Diseases Prevention Bill. That is to say, it favoured intervention into the lives of lower class women, policing their movement, but allowed the traffic of animals throughout England to continue, believing in the merits of free trade when it benefited landowning farmers. Only once the cattle plague broke out in 1865, resulting in huge losses to agricultural interests, did the government finally introduce “comprehensive controls on the movement of foreign livestock” (Perren, *Meat Trade*, 142).

The “fear of contagion” (75) represents a key point of intersection between my interest in vegetarian food politics and Walkowitz’s study of sexual danger. Like the imagined figure of the public woman, animals in the 1860s became associated with the threat of pollution. Lower class women (prostitutes, servants, governesses) were seen as the “conduit of infection to respectable society,” transmitting the “dangers of the streets to the bourgeois home” (Walkowitz, *City*, 22). Similarly, the flesh of animals carried unknown diseases and decay into the homes and mouths of the middle classes. Driven through the streets and slaughtered in dark, unsanitary cellars, animals were seen as potential sources of contagion, linked to the blood, stench, filth, disorder, and brutality of Smithfield market. In this way, the prostitute and the animal mirrored each other: both became objects of public inquiry, medical inspection, and legislation; and both occupied a similar position in middleclass ideology as the abject other against which the masculine English subject defined himself. Walkowitz indicates as much when she describes the prostitute in terms of animality: desired and dangerous, the prostitute embodied “the corporeal smells and animal passions” that the middle classes had “repudiated” and “suppressed” in themselves (*City* 21).

Perhaps most significantly, the prostitute and the foreign animal represented parallel dangers to national security and the social body. Prostitution threatened the strength of the nation, the health of the people, and the sanctity of domestic life, eroding England’s ability to defend and reproduce itself (Walkowitz, *Prostitution*, 32). Concurrently, the importation of animals



posed a risk to prized English stock, particularly shorthorn cattle, which, as Harriett Ritvo has demonstrated, stood as incarnate symbols of English wealth, technological innovation, and national identity (46). By bringing disease among English herds, foreign imports undermined the island nation's food security, dealt a blow to the celebrated superiority of English breeds, and tarnished the image of free trade. Prostitution and the livestock trade, two commercial activities that commodified life but also circulated disease, thus brought into play the complementary poles of biopolitics, defined by Foucault as "the disciplines of the body and the regulation of the population" (*History* 139).

As Mary Douglas argues, moral danger arises at those points where things meant to be kept apart are mixed. Purity, by contrast, involves classification, order, and separation (5). Eating, on Douglas's terms, is thus a fundamentally dangerous act because it takes place at the orifices of the body—that is, at the place where inside and outside meet, and where food (the outside) becomes body (the inside)—and thus it must be policed and regulated through ritual. "If," as Judith Butler argues in a discussion of Douglas, "the body is synecdochal for the social system *per se* [...] then any kind of unregulated permeability constitutes a site of pollution and endangerment" (*Gender Trouble* 180). To eat is to take the outside inside, to blur the distinction between self and other in the very process of constituting the self (Tompkins 4). As food studies scholars argue, eating is ambivalent, at once aggressive (consuming the object) and precarious (we open ourselves up to the outside) (Kilgour 7). When we eat, we consume the labour and bodies of others, making their lives ours; in doing so we blur the limits of individuality (Kilgour 7; Derrida, "Eating Well," 113). In the second half of the nineteenth century, eating brought one's lips, mouth, and digestive tract into contact with an expanding and increasingly anonymous world of goods. Living in urban cities, people came to know less and less about the conditions in which their food was produced. Sites of consumption became divorced from the sites of production.

Transported long distances on steamships and railways, animals arrived from unknown sources, and could be slaughtered in unknown establishments and circumstances far outside a city's limits and legal jurisdiction (Perren 132, 141; Metcalfe 111). Hence, while the consumption of flesh underwrote English masculinity, meat eating also relied on bringing foreign animals, and diseases, into the country, making it a contradictory practice of national identification.<sup>34</sup> These animals not only carried disease, but also came from the east, upsetting the symbolism of the roast beef of old England. What Douglas describes as the universal dangers of eating was exacerbated by the specific crisis of the cattle plague, which made meat seem like matter out of place.

The VS sought to exploit the anxiety of eating in a global economy, evoking a connection between food and sexual danger. Like the social purity movement, the VS saw a connection between physiology and morality, both medicalizing sin and moralizing health, an ideological move which allowed the vegetarians to ally dietary reform with moral reform. If social purity was a moral campaign, one oriented toward purifying society of "vice," the vegetarians presented their diet as its material, physiological supplement. Playing on the multiple meanings of "the flesh," the VS aligned its diet with chastity. It wanted to link appetite with desire, eating flesh with fleshly lust; for instance, in 1872, amid new reports on livestock diseases, the *Dietetic Reformer* situated the vegetarian movement as part of the broader "warfare against the 'fleshly lust,' against the carnal tendencies of the present age" (Jan 1872, 9). Combating the overwhelming association of meat with British masculinity, the vegetarians presented their diet as an everyday practice of moral and corporeal self-government; their taboo on flesh offered a means of controlling what went into the body, of regulating bodily permeability and boundaries.

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<sup>34</sup> Metcalfe, in her history of Smithfield Market, argues that the mid-century campaign to reform the market created a conflict between two constructions of Englishness, one based on "national cleanliness" and another based on "the consumption of meat" (111).

The ambiguity of the phrase, “Contagious Diseases,” helped to expedite the C.D. Acts’ passage in parliament, but this ambiguity also aided the vegetarians’ effort to align the social purity movement with their movement for pure food. For instance, as Walkowitz notes, the first Act of 1864 faced little opposition partly because it was limited to military towns and partly because the “deliberate vagueness” of the phrase, *contagious diseases*, did not seem to refer specifically to women, prostitution, or venereal disease (*Prostitution* 70).<sup>35</sup> Contemporary commentators also noted this vagueness. When the first Contagious Diseases Act passed in 1864, many assumed, as the reformer Edmund Beales noted in the *Dietetic Reformer*, it “was intended for beasts, and not for women” (*DR* July 1870, 83). Francis William Newman, president of the VS and, according to Walkowitz, one of the most outspoken opponents of the C.D. Acts (*Prostitution*, 83), similarly noted that, after the Act passed in 1864, “[t]he public, both then and later, supposed it to refer to the Cattle Murrain” (*Social Evil* 4). This confusion allowed the House of Commons to push through the first Contagious Diseases Act (Women) with little opposition; however, the ambiguity over the referent of “contagious diseases” also allowed the VS to associate eating meat with moral pollution. Vegetarians strove to imply that the historical rise in meat consumption was, like prostitution, a social evil and cause of contagion, a sign of the “carnal tendencies of the present age” (Jan 1872, 9).

The campaign to repeal the C.D. Acts did not begin in earnest until 1870, following the Acts’ extension in 1868 (Walkowitz, *Prostitution*, 90). The *Dietetic Reformer* was the organ of vegetarianism, but its July 1870 issue devoted itself to the repeal movement, publishing a series of essays, lectures, and book reviews that together condemned the C.D. Acts as “unconstitutional

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<sup>35</sup> The Acts were often written, “Contagious Diseases (Women) Acts,” to distinguish them from the “Contagious Diseases (Animals) Act.” This parenthetical specification suggests that lower class women and nonhuman animals were similarly subject to the legal and medical mechanisms of biopower.

and immoral” (July 1870, 82). Here, then, we see one instance of where the *Dietetic Reformer* incorporated a social cause other than vegetarianism, appealing to reformers outside their movement. The vegetarians, particularly Francis Newman, who is the subject of the following chapter, actively opposed the C.D. legislation for reasons that had little to do with their personal vegetarianism; however, the campaign against the Acts nonetheless provided them with an opportunity to demonstrate vegetarianism’s relationship to other causes. For instance, the rhetoric the vegetarians used to criticize the C.D. Acts paralleled their characterization of meat eating’s social and moral effects. Newman and others primarily criticized the C.D. Acts on legal grounds, as a violation of women’s rights; as the editors of the *Dietetic Reformer* wrote, “We do not object to the curing of disease, but we do object to the curing of disease at the sacrifice of constitutional privileges” (July 1870, 82). But, in addition to violating individuals’ rights, the Acts’ also carried implications for the moral culture of society as a whole; the *Dietetic Reformer* represented them as a danger to “the purity of the society and the safety and stability of the nation” (July 1870, 91). By attempting to regulate, rather than prevent, prostitution, the C.D. Acts implicitly legitimized “the sin of promiscuous sexual intercourse” (July 1870, 67). The *Dietetic Reformer* often represented the rise of meat eating in similar terms as a threat to the moral stability of society. As the editors wrote in 1866, reporting on the outbreak of the cattle plague,

Everywhere the custom of meat-eating is increasing, and the craving for luxuries and stimulants that almost always accompanies it is also increasing. We find that insanity and many terrible diseases, notwithstanding improvements in the art of medicine, are becoming more common, and tremble to think of where it will end. (April 1866, 40).

As it often did, the *Dietetic Reformer* associated meat with “terrible diseases” and “luxuries and stimulants,” particularly alcohol; meat eating spread disease, but, as this passage suggests, meat was itself a disease, with symptoms that included “craving for luxuries” (40). Based around home-baked bread, oat cakes, market gardens, and locally cultivated fruit and vegetables, a vegetarian

diet could be represented as thoroughly domestic and English, the cure for foreign luxuries and carnal desires.<sup>36</sup> The words “pure food” and “pure vegetable food” peppered vegetarian publications, associating the movement with social purity. In an article on the “Food Crisis,” the *Dietetic Reformer* argued that “a meat diet is not only unnecessary, but decidedly less conducive to health than one of pure vegetables” (April 1866, 39). In this and other instances, the *Dietetic Reformer* represented meat as “unnecessary,” a superfluous luxury and sign of excess, whereas vegetables were “pure”: they provided one only with the essentials of life, necessary nutrition without anything excessive (too much pleasure or flavour, say).<sup>37</sup> The words “pure” and “purity” denoted the natural purity of their food (unadulterated, free from chemical or artificial ingredients), but they also implied a metonymic connection with those who ate the pure vegetables, troping on the well-known aphorism, *you are what you eat*. To eat pure food was to embody purity and, the vegetarians implied, to immunize oneself from disease and temptation.

To make the case for vegetarian purity, its advocates imported arguments from the social purity campaign. One central argument of the social purity movement was that the Contagious Diseases Acts, in the words of Francis Newman, merely “dealt with effects, not causes” (*Social Evil* 4). That is, in regulating disease, the Acts targeted its symptom, not underlying cause, which Newman identified as the organized exploitation of poor women by powerful men (4). Newman, when speaking on behalf of vegetarianism, made a comparable argument about effects and causes with the diseased meat trade. By regulating the trade, health officials did not change the system that produced the disease:

The causes of the disease being left untouched, no permanent cure can come in this way: the supply is lessened and prices are hoisted up with no benefit to the graziers. All the diseased meat can never be condemned; a margin always remains of what is suspected,

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<sup>36</sup> For a reading of vegetarianism in the antebellum US as the guarantor of somatic security against the market economy, see Michelle Neely.

<sup>37</sup> See Timothy Morton’s *The Poetics of Spice* for a discussion of spices and sugar as superfluous stimulants.

and is sold off cheap. To this many of the poor fall victims, if they unhappily regard flesh food as a necessity or as a highly valued luxury. The vegetarian avoids this danger, and does not empty his purse on an expensive and less wholesome food. (*Essays on Diet* 129).

For Newman, the cause of the cattle disease was the industrialized economy of animal life. The cure was vegetarianism, which promised to protect individuals from expensive, unwholesome food, tempering the desire for “gormandizing” (*Essays*, 44-45). Whereas “flesh-eating” induced “the evils of over feeding” (44), vegetarianism taught the virtues of moderation and self-control. As he argued in his first lecture for the VS, “[s]imple habits in eating and drinking lead naturally to independence of mind and intellectual tastes. Such tastes carry men into a new sphere, remove them from many low vices, and make many virtues easier” (“On Vegetarianism” 4). Vegetarian habits, Newman believed, would give one independence and self-control, cultivating virtuous subjects who would no longer be subject to the “vices” that spread disease among humans and other animals. Vegetarianism was good self-government.

Thus, if, as many feared, diseased cattle were a symptom of urban overcrowding, poor sanitation, and miasmatic clouds hanging over dairy sheds, then vegetarians claimed that they had the cure: a form of pure, natural eating that was not tainted by city streets, slaughterhouses, and the bodies of animals. In the divided social landscape of Victorian London, in which respectable households and families asserted their social and spatial distance from the slums of the East end, the figure of the prostitute represented a danger because she crossed boundaries: she signified the “permeable and transgressed border between classes and sexes” (Walkowitz, *City*, 22). Those who supported the extension of the C.D. Acts did so because they feared the spread of infection across social barriers (from the prostitute to the husband to the wife).<sup>38</sup> However, amid this panic

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<sup>38</sup> In his pamphlet calling for the Acts’ repeal, Newman parodied the melodramatic arguments of the regulationists: “Well,” say they: “are we to endure that a husband shall frequent evil houses, consort with unsound women, bring back disease to his unhappy wife, and transmit it to his innocent children? Think of the poor dear children! Malignant virus is being introduced into respectable families. We must by any severity stop this contagion.” (*Social Evil* 12)

over prostitution, vegetarian reformers argued it was in fact diseased meat that transgressed borders and introduced disease to respectable families. Even those families whose husbands and fathers did not visit brothels on the wrong side of town, still needed to look to their dinner plates. That is to say, even those who felt relatively insulated from the dangers of prostitutes and city streets were still vulnerable at the mouth. Vegetarians wanted others to realize that meat was the unacknowledged conduit of contagion from Whitechapel slaughterhouses to middleclass households. Meat was, in other words, matter out of place, matter that crossed the division between East and West ends, between low and high, between public streets and private homes, between human and animal. This rhetoric aligned vegetarian food reform with “middleclass concerns with immorality, city waste, pollution, and infection” (Walkowitz 22). The cattle disease was an opportunity for the small community of vegetarians to address their concerns to a wider audience and ally themselves with social purity.

In the following section, I address the history of the cattle plague in England, and how its outbreak, and the following crisis, opened up space for the vegetarians to contest the meaning of meat and re-signify it as dirt—that is, as matter out of place or a form of food not suitable in a modern, industrialized society. Rather than advocate medical measures (such as quarantining foreign livestock), the VS instead sought to emphasize the “powers and dangers” (Douglas) that accompany the management of animal life.

### **Beef in a Time of Cattle Plague: Adulteration and Diseased Meat**

In the 1850s and 60s, a significant relationship developed between eating and reading. The repeal of taxation made daily newspapers more affordable, and periodicals began to mediate the consumption of food, a development demonstrated by newspaper reporting on adulteration. In

his *Social History of Diet*, John Burnett describes how chemical analyst Arthur Hassall used modern technology to identify widespread fraud in the food industry. Burnett attributes the publicity generated by Hassall's investigation to two main factors: Hassall's use of the microscope, which brought the authority of science to his discoveries, and the popularization of his work in newspapers. Between 1851 and 1854, Hassall published his investigations in the *Lancet*, revealing not only commercial fraud (water added to milk, chicory to coffee), but also health hazards (such as mineral dyes added to tea, tinned meats, and confectionary). As Burnett argues, Hassall's revelations reached the public not through the *Lancet*, a specialist journal, but in "abbreviated and simplified" versions in the popular press, which "diffused an awareness of adulteration among a wide public who would never have opened the pages of the *Lancet*" (250). As Burnett writes, "week by week the truth was uncovered" (242), producing a "deep effect on the middle-class conscience" (250). Food became news, and the periodical press became a key mechanism in forming consumer tastes. In an era of *laissez-faire* principles with no government regulation, newspapers and journals adopted the role of protecting consumers.

Hassall's analysis of adulterated food captured public attention in the 1850s, and ultimately led to the first Adulteration of Foods Act in 1860, but this early legislation on food quality covered only manufactured articles and not, as Perren notes, the conditions of slaughter ("Filth" 132). Thus, the adulteration Act appeared incapable of dealing with new threats to the economy of food that began to emerge at this time, particularly the problem of diseased meat. Furthermore, the legislation remained permissive and its enforcement optional; as Burnett points out, "[n]o central authority was created" (257) largely because in 1860 any "legislative interference with the free workings of the economy" contradicted the doctrine of free trade (258). The British press found itself in the somewhat contradictory position of calling for increased government intervention into the food trade at the same that it was agitating for its own freedom from



government control. As John Fisher points out, the fact that the repeal of the Corn Laws represented the centrepiece of free trade made it particularly difficult to place any limitations “on the food of the people” (“Effects” 278), even when the food of the people endangered their health. In the 1850s and 60s, the economic consensus on free trade, which animated the campaigns against the Corn Laws and newspaper taxes, also generated resistance to regulating the movement of cattle within England. The reluctance to intervene in the livestock economy opened up space for the VS to present their dietary practice as a form of rational self-government, a way of protecting oneself from the high cost and unhealthy state of England’s roast beef, while at the same time not compromising free market principles through government intervention.

Allegations that flesh from diseased animals found its way into markets and human diets were common throughout the 1850s and 60s. In 1864, Henry Bruce, Under Secretary of the Home Department, introduced two bills to the House of Commons, the “Cattle Diseases Prevention Bill” and the “Cattle Importation Bill” that were designed to increase medical inspections of foreign animals entering the country and thereby stop the spread of disease among domestic livestock. An abstract of the ensuing debate in the House of Commons appeared in the *Dietetic Reformer* as part of the journal’s campaign to demonstrate to the perils of eating meat; the journal used the debate in parliament to prove to readers that “disease is increasingly and alarmingly rife” (April 1864, 42). The date of the debate, 8 March 1864, is significant: the cattle plague had not yet arrived in England. These bills, prior to the 1865 outbreak of *rinderpest*, attempted to mitigate less devastating diseases: pleuro-pneumonia and foot and mouth disease, as well as parasites, such as tapeworms and trichinae. The debate that followed the bills’ reading discloses the two interrelated concerns over contagious diseases and the livestock economy in the 1860s: a public health concern over the sale of rotten meat for human consumption, and an economic concern over the spread of foreign disease among English livestock, which threatened

the nation's wealth—that is, the wealth of the landowning elites and agricultural community. Henry Bruce, when introducing the bills, gave precedence to the economic question of animals as property. He noted, for instance, that Britain contained 8,000,000 head of cattle, as well as several hundred thousand sheep and pigs, with a total value of £121,800,000. Bruce reportedly commented that “[t]hese figures indicated the magnitude and importance of the interests involved in this question” (April 1864, 42). The stakes were high, so to speak, and many feared that the dissemination of disease would wipe out the wealth concentrated in the bodies of animals. Bruce calculated for his audience that, with an average annual mortality rate between five and ten per cent, the United Kingdom already lost £1,200,000 per year to disease. Pleuro-pneumonia, “the most fatal disease” (42), was responsible for half the deaths.

According to Bruce and other contemporary commentators, these contagious diseases, such as pneumonia and foot-and-mouth, first arrived in England in the 1840s with “the general liberalization of trade” and the first imports of foreign stock (Fisher 278; Burnett 132-33). Like the repeal of the Corn Laws and the campaign against the taxes on knowledge, the abolition of tariffs on animals participated in the broader restructuring of society according to *laissez-faire* ideas (Perren 74; Orwin and Whetham 40). The attempt to regulate the trade created a conflict between those MPs and sanitary reformers who favoured government intervention, and those who represented agricultural interests (Orwin and Whetham 138). Bruce was aware of this fundamental division. When introducing the bills on cattle diseases, he noted that “it was no easy matter to interfere effectually to prevent the spread of infectious diseases among cattle, without at the same time interfering unduly with the operations of the agriculturist” (*DR*, April 1864, 43). Interestingly, the conflict hinged not on economic policy but differing interpretations of the cause of disease. Taking a position on the importation of cattle required that one appeal either to germ theory (contagion), or to theories of spontaneous generation. Henry Bruce, and those who

supported him, subscribed to the theory of contagion, arguing that the disease had been introduced to England with foreign cattle. Bruce drew attention to the lack of consensus—“some said it was contagious, other that it was not contagious” (43)—but he personally felt that “the preponderance of argument was in favour of its being contagious” (April 1864, 43). If it could be proven to be contagious, then free trade was the problem and controlling the movement of cattle was the answer. One MP by the name of CW Packe, who spoke in favour of Bruce’s measures, argued quite bluntly that, “disease was not known before the importation of foreign cattle in 1844,” and thus free trade had proven to be “a great curse” (April 1864, 45). MPs who opposed the legislation argued that diseases had arisen spontaneously in England. According to the transcript of the debate, Sir James Caird, author of *High Farming Under Liberal Covenants*, “thought that it would be wrong to attribute the increase of disease solely to the introduction of foreign cattle” (April 1864, 45). Caird, a Scottish farmer and advocate of free trade, came into prominence at the mid-century for identifying new methods of fattening cattle (“high farming”) to compensate for the fall in grain prices that followed the repeal of the Corn Laws (Mingay, “Sir James Caird”). In the House of Commons, he dismissed Bruce’s concerns, asserting that diseases were the inevitable side effect of high farming or the “highly artificial state in which they now kept and fed cattle” (April 1864, 45). If diseases arose independently from farming practices, then limiting the movement of animals to and within Britain would have no effect in controlling the problem. Others argued that the bills would reintroduce protectionism, and cause more economic damage than the disease itself (Perren 66; Gamgee, *The Cattle Plague*, 204-05). For instance, Sir M.S. Stewart feared that Bruce’s proposed legislation “would completely paralyse the operations of the farmers and graziers of Scotland” (*DR*, April 1864, 45). Ultimately, the opposition triumphed, and the bills on the prevention of cattle disease did not pass. A year later, in 1865, the cattle plague reached England, decimating herds, bankrupting farmers, and driving up the price of meat.

Because of its suddenness, speed, and high mortality rates, the outbreak of *rinderpest* throughout 1865 and 1866 became “the major public and political issue of the day” (Fisher 651). Perren estimates that three million animals died in the 1865 outbreak, making it a “traumatic experience” for the nation (“Impediments,” 141-2). J.R. Fisher similarly describes it as an “exogenous shock” (279). It created a sensation and a panic.

One name that appeared frequently in the House of Commons debate and in the press reports on diseases in animals was that of John Gamgee, a veterinarian from Edinburgh. If Arthur Hassall’s investigations brought adulteration into the public’s consciousness, the work of Gamgee and his brother, the physician Joseph Sampson Gamgee, was responsible for alerting the public to the spread of diseases among livestock (Perren, “Filth,” 133-34). As Perren notes, “with their combined knowledge of human and animal pathology” (133) the brothers Gamgee occupied a strong position to identify diseases in animals and their effects on humans. However, not everyone was convinced of John Gamgee’s authority. Henry Bruce approvingly cited his investigations of slaughterhouses, but, in his response, Sir James Caird questioned whether Gamgee represented “a real practical authority” on whom they could base their legislation (*DR*, April 1864, 45). Veterinarians were not yet recognized as medical professionals (Fisher 654). Hence, Gamgee’s campaign to reform the slaughtering system aimed not only to contain diseases, but also to legitimize his occupation.

The brothers first began their efforts in 1857 by writing letters of warning to the press (Perren, *Meat*, 51). While John Gamgee wrote to the major newspapers of Scotland and the *Times* of London, his brother, Joseph, published an open letter on “The Cattle Plague and Diseased Meat” to Sir George Grey, then Home Secretary. The aim of the Gamgees was, in Joseph’s words, “to expose a system, actually productive of great calamity and imminently threatening a much greater one—a cattle plague” (3). The “great calamity” already in existence was the fact that

the public was “largely consuming diseased meat as food” (3); the greater threat on the horizon was “the invasion of a plague, which is devastating the herds in various parts of the European continent” (3). As early as 1857 the Gamgees anticipated the cattle plague. The brothers controversially argued that quarantining foreign animals, and temporarily suspending the movement of animals within Britain, were the only means of controlling the disease’s spread among English stock (JS Gamgee, “Cattle Plague,” 33-34; Perren, “Filth,” 133-35).

In addition to writing letters of warning, John Gamgee published the *Edinburgh Veterinary Review*, a monthly journal which discussed technical matters of animal husbandry, but also became a platform for exposing the abuses of the meat trade (Perren, *Meat*, 52). As such, it provides us with historical evidence on the concerns of the veterinarians, health inspectors, and sanitary reformers who first called for reform. For instance, in 1862 John Gamgee produced, at the request of the Privy Council, an inquiry into the importation of foreign cattle and the extent of disease in England, which received much attention in the pages of the *Edinburgh Veterinary Review*. From a summary and discussion of the report, we learn that, to carry out his investigation, Gamgee was “authorised to visit any principal markets and slaughter places in the United Kingdom, as well as any districts where he might believe that disease was particularly rife” (*Edinburgh Veterinary Review*, Sept. 1864, 540).<sup>39</sup> What Gamgee witnessed in the dairy sheds and slaughterhouses of Britain merely confirmed his earlier suspicions, but it nonetheless shocked many readers, contributing to the debate in the House of Commons. In an oft-cited statement, Gamgee alleged that one fifth of the meat consumed in Britain came from diseased animals. Many farmers, butchers, and stock dealers regarded the sale of diseased meat as a lamentable, yet necessary, feature of the trade (Perren 51-2); as one dealer testified, the disease was so prevalent in

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<sup>39</sup> Several volumes of the *Edinburgh Veterinary Review* are available on Google Books. I cite this material by monthly issue and page number. Hereafter I abbreviate to the journal’s title to *EVR*.

cattle that, if they did not sell the meat from diseased animals, they faced financial ruin (*DR*, April 1864, 44). As Gamgee revealed, it was common practice among farmers to sell animals for slaughter at the first sign of disease to avoid personal economic losses (Perren 55). The diseased animals would then be butchered, and their meat, which the Gamgee brothers saw as “unfit for human consumption,” would be artfully trimmed to disguise any sign of the disease (Gamgee, “Cattle Disease,” 21-22). What seems to have annoyed John Gamgee about this system of subterfuge was the lack of faith it placed in veterinarians: when an animal fell ill the farmer was more likely to call the butcher than a veterinarian. As the *Birmingham Daily Post* reported, in an article reprinted by the *Dietetic Reformer*, John Gamgee revealed “a constantly increasing practice of sending an animal to the butcher rather than call in professional aid in the first stages of disease” (April 1862, 46). Some of Gamgee’s revelations in his report are worth quoting, if only to offer a taste of the allegations. According to the *Edinburgh Veterinary Review*, Gamgee demonstrated,

that horned cattle affected with pleuro-pneumonia are, much oftener than not, slaughtered on account of the disease, and when slaughtered, are commonly (except their lungs) eaten; and this, even though the lung-disease have made such progress as notably to taint the carcass; that animals affected with foot-and-mouth disease are not often slaughtered on account of it, but if slaughtered, are uniformly eaten; that animals affected with anthracic and anthracoid diseases, especially swine and horned cattle thus affected, are (except their gangrenous parts) very extensively eaten; that the presence of parasites in the flesh of an animal never influences the owner against selling it for food; that carcasses, too obviously ill-conditioned for exposure in the butcher’s shop, are abundantly sent to the sausage makers, or some times pickled and dried; that specially diseased organs will often, perhaps commonly, be thrown aside, but that some sausage-makers will utilize even the most diseased organs which can be furnished them; that the principal alternative, on a large scale, to the above described human consumption of diseased carcasses is, that, in connection with some slaughtering establishments, swine (destined themselves presently to become human food) are habitually fed on the offal and scavenge of the shambles, and devour, often raw and with other abominable filth, such diseased organs as are below the sausage-maker’s standard of usefulness. (*EVR*, September 1864, 542)

As John Gamgee’s startling conclusions suggest, the eating of diseased animals raised significant concerns over public health, particularly the health of the working classes, who, it was often

argued, consumed the bulk of the diseased meat. But, as his brother Joseph Gamgee noted in his letter to the Home Secretary, much debate occurred over what exactly made meat “unfit for human consumption” (21). The ambiguity and subjective nature of the very expression, “*unfit for human food*” (21), impeded the enforcement of the (already permissive) laws governing the sale of meat, as Joseph discovered when he attempted to prosecute a butcher at the New Islington Cattle Market of London (21-23). As Joseph Gamgee pointed out, inspectors of markets and nuisances had to prove not only the meat’s inferior quality (a largely subjective and class-based judgment), but its “absolute unfitness for human food” (21), a task which, he pointed out, the market inspectors were unqualified to do (21-22). The Gamgees therefore called not only for more inspectors, but also for scientifically trained inspectors: “to determine the question of *fitness* or *unfitness* a man must be trained in the lights of science” (“Cattle Disease,” 21). England, they argued, not only lacked efficient legislation and inspection to handle the importation of foreign animals; just as importantly, it also lagged behind the continent in biomedical knowledge on the nature of diseases affecting animals<sup>40</sup>; it was particularly in the dark on the communicability of illness to human consumers (Gamgee, “Cattle Disease,” 18, 24, 28).

To remedy the limitations of medical knowledge on the transmission of disease from nonhuman to human animals, the Gamgees called for more research. Joseph Gamgee argued that the sale of diseased meat made it imperative to understand “the effect on man of eating meat from an animal that has died or been killed with disease” (28). The lack of knowledge made it seem almost certain that “the number of cases of illness referable to the eating of diseased meat is even much greater than recorded in the annals of science” (30). This uncertainty surrounding the

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<sup>40</sup> John Fisher has argued that the arrival of the cattle plague forced the acceptance of germ theory in Britain and “brought British science into line with Continental directions” (“British Physicians” 665). Romano, however, has criticized Fisher’s historical narrative, arguing that the British nineteenth-century understanding of germs and bacteria was much more ambiguous and uncertain than Fisher allows (69-71).

effects of diseased meat on humans made it difficult to quantify the danger to human health, leaving room for fear to incubate. John Gamgee, in a lecture titled “The Diseases of Animals in Relation to Public Health and Prosperity,” warned, vaguely, that “the traffic in diseased animals favours the development of disease in humans” (*EVR*, May 1863, 261). Eating flesh from cattle with pleuropneumonia, he claimed, caused diarrhea, abdominal pain, and even death: “the tens of thousands of cases of diseased animals sold in all large towns are stealing life from human beings when and where we least expect it” (262). His brother Joseph Gamgee similarly claimed that the consumption of diseased meat could cause “the most baneful results, even speedy death” (29), though he did not draw a direct line of causation; he only went so far as to claim that “from impure materials the sustenance of the human body cannot be derived without risk” (30).<sup>41</sup>

The risk and uncertainty involved in building up the body from potentially “impure materials” was often thought to disproportionately affect the poor. Meat deemed inedible and “unfit for food” by middle and upper class consumers could be sold to the working classes, who, unable to afford the prime cuts, had to buy near-putrid meat. However, as the Gamgees noted, meat from diseased animals also made its way onto the tables of the middle classes. Once an animal was slaughtered and its meat dressed, it could be difficult, if not impossible, to determine whether it derived from a diseased animal. The uncertain means of identifying diseased meat in shops added to the unease and anxiety around the familiar act of eating.

Discerning healthy from unhealthy meat may have been difficult, but Gamgee left little ambiguity about the ultimate source of disease. In his lectures and letters, he unequivocally attributed its arrival in England to the importation of foreign animals from the east: “The

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<sup>41</sup> Henry Bruce, when discussing the Cattle Disease Prevention bill in the House of Commons, raised the question of zoonotic contamination—“Did this sale of diseased meat lead to disease in the human frame?”—which he answered in the affirmative by citing a number of authorities, including Dr. Letheby, Health Inspector of London, who claimed to have seen numerous cases of illness from eating diseased meat (*DR* April 1864, 43).



epizootic disorders, or cattle and sheep plagues, are traced in variably to the east” (*EVR*, Jan. 1863, 10), he argued. Across different media platforms (his own *EVR* and the *Times*), Gamgee contended that the importation of foreign animals, which was meant to bolster the supply, ironically contributed to the growing shortage and rising price of meat in England:

The price of meat is high, and still higher must it go. There is no alternative. Our foreign importations have led to a steady rise in price for years past, and must still favour that rise if we do not check their plague-disseminating tendencies. [...] Prudent men must agree with me, that under existing circumstances we need something more than the rapid transmission of stock from foreign to British markets (*Times*, 10 Nov. 1863, 7).

The general press concurred in identifying the spread of disease with foreign animals. In the wake of the cattle plague, *All the Year Round*, wrote that the descendants of “Oriental cattle” were “the cause of all our woes” (21 Dec. 1867, 41). At the time of the first outbreak, “our salesmen were in communication with cattle-dealers in Berlin and Vienna” (41), while “railways having been opened up to Eastern Europe, we had tapped the grassy plains of Hungary and Poland” (41). Thus, the very technological advances (such as mass communication and the mobility of railways) which strengthened England’s industrial economy also threatened to compromise its immunity, bringing the domestic interior into communication with the infectious exterior.

Indeed, Gamgee identified the transmission of disease not only from cow to cow, but also along the chains of commerce and communication, indicating that the disease was spread not simply by cattle or unsanitary conditions, but by the forces of the market. Take, for instance, the telegraph, which, by rapidly communicating the weekly price of cattle in London to stock traders on the continent, stimulated the transit of cattle, suggesting that the doubling of animal disease and telecommunication has a longer history than Shukin recognizes. John Gamgee’s letters to the *Times* in 1863 not only anticipated the 1865 outbreak, but also identified for readers the technologies (the telegraph) that made it possible:

Many of your readers may not be aware that every Monday morning the London prices are telegraphed to Hamburg, Kotterdam, and other ports, whence the information is transmitted to such distant markets as those of Vienna and Berlin. If prices suit, cattle and other animals are trucked from these cities for London. (*Times*, 13 Nov. 1863, 5)

Gamgee further noted the importance of railways: while in the eighteenth century cattle diseases followed in the wake of advancing armies, in the nineteenth century “[s]team has proved a more certain means for encouraging the transmission of contagious disorders than war” (5). With the completion of railways between France and eastern Europe, Gamgee warned that “there can be little to prevent the markets in the West of Europe from being placed in direct communication with the markets in the extreme East” (*Times*, 10 Nov. 1863, 7). To use Shukin’s terminology, the rapid transmission of disease was the “pathological double” (182) of steam-powered mobility and telegraphic communication. While railways had mitigated the time and cost of transporting animals to urban centres, they had also become incubators and disseminators of disease. The cattle plague arrived first in London, and from there spread throughout the network of cattle markets and rail lines (Perren 78). The importation of, and threat of infection from, foreign animals extended the anxieties inherent in the act of eating to the national body. Importing cattle across borders and through ports brought the impure outside inside, violating the isolation and immunity England enjoyed as an “island nation” (Ritvo 47).

### **The Arguments of Vegetarians**

Like Arthur Hassall’s analyses of adulteration, John Gamgee’s investigations of slaughterhouses were disseminated throughout the press. In August 1865, the summer of the plague outbreak, the *Illustrated London News* described “the panic which has seized the agricultural mind and is communicating itself to that of the public at large” (12 August, 1865, 126), a panic that the paper was, of course, itself helping to communicate to the public. Assessing the threat posed by cattle plague, the *Illustrated London News* claimed that it was exacerbated by two features of the

nineteenth century: the fact that “almost every district of the kingdom is in easy communication with the metropolis and, through it, with every other district” (126); and the fact that “a considerable portion of our working people have now become meat-eaters” (126), a comment that blames the aspiring appetites of the working classes for bringing infection to the social body. As the article suggests, two pillars of England’s industrial and social superiority, the network of railways and the consumption of animal protein, were also what made it vulnerable to a danger that was at once economic and biomedical. The virulent cattle plague raised the specter of economic disaster for farmers and scarcity for “our working people” (126).

Responding to the same historical phenomena, the VS articulated its own interpretation and response to the meat problem, a response that was nonetheless made possible by the outcry in the general press over the shortage and consequent high prices. As Richard Perren notes, “[a]fter 1850 the meat supply situation became progressively more difficult,” the panic reaching “a fever pitch” by the 1870s (*Taste* 8-9). Where John Gamgee and Henry Bruce attributed the disease to imports, the VS contended that the contagion was endemic to, and the logic consequence of, England’s system of fattening and transporting livestock. As Francis Newman pointed out in a public lecture, “[i]t is all but universal with English reasoners (whether peculiar to us as a nation, I do not know), to disbelieve the possibility that contagious disease is engendered by ourselves. The guilt of it is always laid on the foreigner. Unlucky foreigners, how do they get it?” (*DR*, March 1872, 35). The source of infection, Newman argued in his lectures and essays, did not lie on the outside, but at the very heart of England’s agricultural system.<sup>42</sup> Charles Forward, author of the *Ethics of Diet*, echoed Newman’s assessment in a later article for the *Food Reform Magazine*: “Under the impression that this disease cannot have its commencement in a Christian country like

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<sup>42</sup> Newman elaborated on this point in an essay for *Frazer’s Magazine*: “our men of science believe that England cannot generate disease at home; it all, forsooth, must come from abroad; vice and unnatural treatment never breed maladies on *our* pure soil!” (Feb. 1875, 159).

England, it is put down to foreign parts” (July 1884, 22). Rather than blame “unlucky foreigners” (35), Newman and Forward wanted “English reasoners” to recognize their own culpability and impurity—that is, the possibility that “a Christian country like England” too can engender disease (22). More importantly, they identified the modern methods of animal management, particularly the accelerated pace of production and transportation, as the cause. The cattle disease was the inevitable outcome of the large-scale management of animal life. It was inherent in the system, and not an aberration that could be blamed on the unlucky and unsanitary other.

Interestingly, in making this argument, Newman, Forward, and other vegetarians adopted the rhetoric of the farmers and cattle dealers, who, in support of free trade, refuted the theory of contagion, claiming that one could not definitively attribute disease to imports. For instance, Sir James Caird’s defense of free trade—his argument that disease was the regrettable side effect of high farming, and not the fault of importation—echoed many of the claims made by Newman and Forward. In criticizing the English press for blaming “the foreigner,” the vegetarians would thus seem to be on the wrong side of science, siding with the anti-contagionists who wanted unrestricted access to continental livestock.<sup>43</sup> However, Newman and other vegetarian advocates were not, of course, trying to vindicate the cattle trade. Rather, they strategically deployed claims from both sides of the debate to develop their own argument in favour of vegetarianism. They liberally cited Gamgee’s investigations into diseased meat, publicizing the dangers of meat eating, but they also took from free trade advocates the suggestion that the modern management of animals, and not importation, was to blame. Hence, on the one hand, they could cite Gamgee to demonstrate that meat was a biological threat, while, on the other hand, they could draw from the free traders to point out that there was no way to stop it—that is, without giving up meat entirely.

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<sup>43</sup> On the debate between the contagionists and anti-contagionists, see John Fisher, “British Physicians, Medical Science, and the Cattle Plague.”

Domestic supply was insufficient to meet demand, and thus England could not continue to eat meat without foreign, and potentially sick, imports. The nation was therefore trapped in a paradox; it could neither live with or without the importation of animals.<sup>44</sup> Whereas Gamgee and other reformers in the press advocated protective measures, such as quarantines and medical inspections, believing that the meat trade could be sanitized, the VS wanted to undermine any sense of safety in consuming meat. Newman in particular wanted to present meat as matter not only out of place, but also out of time, an anachronism in modern society.

Throughout his lectures, essays, and correspondence in the years following the outbreak, Newman argued that the cause of the cattle plague was the dramatic rise in the demand for meat in the nineteenth century; this “rush after flesh meat” (*Essays*, 69), he argued, placed excessive demands on cattle and dairy cows to produce meat and milk in ever-increasing quantities. In an 1870 lecture, he contended that the modern “clamour for flesh” (“VEM” 13) destabilized the ability of the nation to feed itself: it upset the rhythms of nature, and threatened to bring disease among the working classes who were sold unwholesome flesh. To capitalize on the appetites of an “enriched population” which had “eagerly bought up all the butcher’s meat” (*Fraser’s*, Feb. 1875, 159), farmers and cattle owners took two measures: “the one, by bringing cattle in great numbers and from more distant places; the other, by breeding them as fast as could be managed” (159). In the first case, the mass transportation of cattle in overcrowded conditions, by train and by steamship, entailed both inhumane treatment and the spread of disease among herds, making pastoral management a source of governmental anxiety: “[t]o transfer such masses of living creatures week by week and day by day in sound health to distant centres must always be an

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<sup>44</sup> As *All the Year Round* lamented, “Of the foreign cattle trade, we may say, paraphrasing a line of one of Horace’s most celebrated odes, “We can neither live with it, nor without it” (21 Dec., 1867, 41).

anxious problem” (*Essays* 71). In the second case, the rapid breeding of animals weakened their constitution and left them susceptible to disease:

the high price of meat, contingent on the increased demand, sets graziers to breed cattle as fast as they can; and in consequence great numbers are born from immature parents [...] Indeed, the whole system of stall feeding, and confinement, and cramming, being essentially artificial, tends further to weaken the whole cow (*DR* March 1872, 36).

Controlling animal life imposed unnatural burdens on reproduction, calving, and milking. Even worse, for both the cattle and the human consumer, was “the fact that animals are bred from animals too young” (8). This control of animal procreation was intended to accelerate the speed and profitability of production: farmers and landowners, “in eagerness to supply the meat market, and gain the utmost return to their capital, [...] artificially bring about a premature breeding of the cattle” (“V.E.M. Diet,” 8), a practice which, while lucrative, produced feeble offspring who were then further subjected to a system “of stall-feeding and cramming, instead of open field and natural pasturage” (8). While it produced “more pounds of meat and unhealthy fat” (8), Newman argued, premature breeding and stall-feeding left the cattle open to illness. As he warned, the “artificial management of the animal is to be feared” (7). Charles Forward described the diseases that resulted from this “artificial management” as the revenge of nature: “Time passes and outraged nature at last rebels, cattle murrain breaks out with terrible vigour” (*FRM*, July 1884, 22).

Newman attributed the rise of disease to the commodification of animals and a capitalist system of agricultural production. One of his points was that in the past, when the men who drove animals to market were also their owners, they carefully tended to the animals’ health; however, on a larger scale of production, when the drovers were wage-earners rather than owners, time, rather than the safety of the stock, was valued above all else:

The case is different, if men have to drive cattle not their own, and are bound to arrive at a certain moment. The poor brutes, transferred from their pleasant pastures, know not whither they are going. [...] Time is lost, and all must be hurried. In the streets of

London, and still worse, in old Smithfield market, we used to see cattle beaten about the head by impatient drivers, perhaps ignorant lads; but the thing is inevitable, when a whole army of them is to be marshalled in a short time. (*DR*, March 1872, 34)

Newman here emphasizes time: both the fast-bred cattle and their impatient drovers are “bound” to the schedule of the market. Fast breeding and a time-regulated market system necessitated cruelty and entailed disease; it oriented food production toward profits and speed rather than the health and well being of both human and non-human populations.

Thus, as Newman described it, the modernization of food and feeding was thus carried out in the name of *speed*. As many commentators pointed out, the development of railways, the penny post, telegraphs, and the daily press accelerated the pace of life in the Victorian period, and life itself—the growth of animal flesh—had to keep up. Fast times need and produce fast foods: as an article on the Smithfield Cattle Show in *Household Words* commented, “we have discovered, also, how to put good beef upon ox bones in about half the time that was spent on that important business thirty years ago” (24 Dec., 1853, 388). The accelerated process of putting beef on bones was made possible by a new system of stall-feeding that fattened cattle on oil cakes, linseed, and root crops rather than on pasturage. For Newman, it was this time-discipline of the nineteenth century, and not simply imported animals, that caused the cattle plague.<sup>45</sup> The problem was not the foreign outsider, but the English insider and the ideological belief in animal protein, time efficiency, and faster production. What was needed was not medical inspection at ports or protection from an external threat, but internal reform, a change in English habits and tastes, which the vegetarians called dietetic reform. The practice of killing and eating animals could not be sanitized or protected, as Gamgee and Henry Bruce wanted to argue, because eating animals was itself the problem. The VS’s annual report for 1866, which assessed the recent outbreak of

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<sup>45</sup> On the time-discipline of industrial capitalism, see, of course, EP Thompson.

the plague, cited Gamgee's proposed "remedy" (medical inspection at ports), but suggested that it was "not very logical" because it failed to address "that very large portion of disease which is home-made" (January 1866, 1). This was one of their central claims, that the disease was home-made, and could thus be eradicated only through a shift to vegetarianism, an internal reform, and not through the banning of external imports. The annual report acknowledged that, "with veterinary inspectors at the principal ports, something like security might be enjoyed" (1), but it also called this sense of security into question. Forward, in his essay on the "Difficulties of Meat-Eaters," succinctly articulated the "difficulties" that meat-eaters faced in an age of livestock disease and global trade:

The idea that prohibition of importation will remove all risks of disease is false as it is absurd. Disease must have a cause, and the causes whether amongst human beings or cattle, are dirt, foul air, and unnatural methods of feeding, all of which are the inevitable concomitants of the transit of cattle by land and sea. (*FRM* July 1884, 23)

Forward here may be scientifically inaccurate on the cause of disease—it was bacterial contagion, not foul air, dirt, or unnatural feeding—but his error served strategic purposes; he and the VS wanted to suggest that the risk of disease was ineliminable and "home-made." It inhered within the system of controlling animal life. Vegetarians did not discount foreign contagion entirely, but they did identify the logistics of fattening, transporting, and killing huge numbers of animals as the primary problem. For instance, in his first lecture for the VS in 1868, Newman argued that

whether cattle be sent by ship, or in railway cars, or be driven long distances, (and, practically all three methods are combined,) disease is incident. [...] stall-fed cattle are of a weaklier constitution, and, even with careful grooming, expensive buildings, and every sanitary precaution, a system so artificial inspires grave anxieties. ("On Vegetarianism," 3)

As I have pointed out, the vegetarians poached this argument on the "artificial" system of animal management from James Caird and free trade advocates, but they transfigured it too; where Caird saw high farming and the "artificial" management of animals as the future of agriculture, the



vegetarians represented it as Faustian overreaching, the hubristic control of nature which no amount of sanitary precautions could safeguard. For Forward, Newman, and the VS, meat in the mouths of the masses was dirt, that is, matter out place; it did not belong because it could not safely feed the population. As the 1866 Annual Report argued, “the effort necessary to keep up the supply of flesh for the increasing millions of our population has entailed, as a necessary consequence, the plague amongst our cattle” (1). Or as Forward later argued, evoking fears over the food supply, “[i]t is too plain that England cannot under this system support her present population” (*FRM*, July 1884, 22). It was, the vegetarians argued, impossible to feed their growing population on meat without entailing disease as a necessary consequence. Even worse, they speculated that the plague would infect human consumers. Just as “unnatural methods of feeding” (*FRM* July 1884, 23) had caused disease in cattle, it could do so in humans.

Vegetarianism, as a “natural” diet, promised to purify the nation—that is, it promised to keep things separate, the human masses and animal flesh. A national vegetarian diet would return labourers to their traditional diet of grains and vegetables, and restore the ecological balance between humans and animals that had been disrupted by the artificial system of stall-feeding.

In the following section, I focus less on what vegetarians argued, and more on how they made their case and positioned evidence in their journal. In his public lectures and journal articles, Newman, to whom I return in chapter five, presented vegetarianism as the rational choice; the nation, he argued across multiple platforms, could not safely feed its population with cattle.

However, in addition to this politics of persuasion and reason, the *Dietetic Reformer* also worked to push people away from meat through disgust. Specifically, the journal carried out social reform at the level of taste. Disgust simply means “bad taste,” and the VS worked to reframe meat as both disgusting and in bad taste, a food that discerning individuals would avoid. In an essay on food

and affect, Ben Highmore defines “taste” broadly as the “orchestration of the sensible, a way of ordering and demeaning, of giving valued and taking it away” (126). In the 1860s, livestock diseases and reported sales of diseased meat disrupted the established “orchestration of the sensible” (126), creating space for the vegetarians’ attempts at reorganizing viscerally entrenched values. That is, the outbreaks of *rinderpest*, pleuro-pneumonia, and trichinosis made it seem possible to shift what Highmore terms “social aesthetics,” or the organization of “perception, sensorial culture, affective intensities” (128). If the consumption of beef conventionally produced feelings of happiness, pleasure, comfort, and pride, the VS made use of the press to link it to revulsion, uncertainty, fear, and shame, contesting the taste for animal protein that had become so embedded in the social body. By recirculating court reports on diseased and rotten meat, the VS did not necessarily aim to engage in rational debate with others, but to carve out an alternative “social aesthetics” and affective community, one bound together by a shared understanding of purity and impurity, taste and distaste. In its reeducation of the palate, it deployed what Highmore terms “an everyday politics, a politics of the guts as much as the mind” (136).

### **Cattle Plague in the *Dietetic Reformer and Vegetarian Messenger***

*We have abundant evidence of the need of dietetic reform, and of the favourable juncture now arrived at for its furtherance. The decreasing supply (proportionately), the consequent rise in price, and the liability to disease, are so many special reasons for advocating our views in addition to the usual strong ones for their adoption. (Dietetic Reformer, Jan. 1866, 2)*

In the 1860s, the VS’s new periodical, the *Dietetic Reformer and Vegetarian Messenger*, adopted the format of a quarterly review; this longer publication cycle meant that the journal had to provide readers with extensive material on dietary reform and related subjects to last them for four months of the year. In layout, the journal appeared as a single column of dense, un-illustrated text,

divided up into regular departments and sections. These departments, outlined in the prospectus to the first quarterly issue, included original essays and articles; speeches re-printed from the meetings of local vegetarian associations; extracts from other journals and newspapers; reviews of new books on diet and health; correspondence from readers; poetry; and, finally, recipes for vegetarian dishes. The prospectus to the first issue also informed readers that “considerable space will be devoted to intelligence” (*DR*, Jan. 1862, 2), a new department that would publish “verbatim, or condensed, reports of lectures or meetings, and extracts from important speeches, as well as brief accounts of any public or social operations” (2). In this way, the journal incorporated a variety of different genres, publishing essays like a literary review, while also including domestic cookery as well as information that was more germane to a pressure-group periodical.

These different departments had different functions and modes of address; most obviously, recipes were addressed to “our lady friends” (Jan. 1861, 2), but leading articles and intelligence also served distinct purposes. Where leading essays were overtly rhetorical, aiming to persuade through rational argumentation, “intelligence,” the department that reprinted news from the press or reports from meetings and local societies, furnished readers with relevant facts and situated readers as part of a network of other vegetarians both within Britain and internationally. Just as importantly, the reprinting of intelligence and information positioned the vegetarian movement in relation to other social movements and political issues, reframing vegetarianism within a wider context.

The department of “*Intelligence, Reports, &c.*,” the first department to draw attention to diseased meat, became increasingly important as discussions of livestock appeared more frequently in the press and at the meetings of scientific societies. For an example of its position in the journal, we can look briefly at the contents of the first quarterly issue of the *Dietetic Reformer* in

January 1861. It contained: a series of articles related to vegetarian practice and doctrine (“The Humanitarian Argument,” “The Domain of Appetite,” and “Hints to Inquirers”); the first serial part of a lecture by Dr. Trall, a vegetarian from the United States (“The Scientific Basis of Vegetarianism”); an extract from the temperance journal, *Alliance News* (“The Vine as Article of Diet”); and a reprint from the *London News* on modern women (“The Fast Young Lady”). These longer articles and extracts were then followed by the shorter departments, including correspondence, poetry, and book reviews (in this issue, reviews included a negative critique of George Henry Lewes, and a positive description of *Pitman’s Popular Lecturer*). The penultimate department, “*Intelligence, Reports, &c.*,” included a report on the annual meeting of the American Vegetarian Society, the transcript of a lecture given by Dr F.R. Lees, and finally, on the second last page of the journal, a report on the sale of diseased meat in London and Liverpool. This report, extracted from “a meeting of the City Commissioners” (Jan. 1861, 31), was presented verbatim, in small print, and without any editorial commentary. Its position at the end of the journal, placed alongside a recipe on how to cultivate wild yeast for baking, suggests the relative lack of importance that diseased meat held in vegetarian print tactics at the beginning of the 1860s. Vegetarians believed they had sufficient “facts, reasons, and arguments” to demonstrate that *all* meat, whether it came from a diseased or healthy animal, represented a poison to “the physical structure, mental vigour, and moral purity of the human economy” (April 1863, 38). However, as panic spread throughout the general press, the *Dietetic Reformer* shifted its tactics, and discussions of diseased meat moved from the margins of the journal to the centre, permeating leaders, essays, and correspondence sections.

The journal soon began to curate and frame the intelligence it extracted from the general press; the second issue of the new quarterly series, April 1861, still opened with a sober essay on practical and doctrinal matters (“Vegetarianism in Cold Climates,” which refuted the common

belief that vegetarianism worked only in the tropics), but it also prefaced its “*Intelligence, Reports, &c.*” by directing the information to “our meat-eating friends”:

DISEASED MEAT.— We commend the following cases, and the important evidence of Dr. Letheby, to the attention of our meat-eating friends, as being likely to convince them that the extent to which the sale of diseased meat is carried on in our large cities is not exaggerated by the advocates of dietetic reform. (*DR*, April 1861, 59)

As the *Dietetic Reformer* seems to acknowledge here, reprinting press reports on diseased meat did not itself constitute an argument in favour of vegetarianism; it merely demonstrated the problems with the food market and suggested the need for reform. By 1864, the journal had expanded its attempts to frame and interpret the meaning of diseased meat for readers, extracting a series of articles from a variety of media platforms—the *Times*, *Daily Telegraph*, *Leeds Mercury*, *Once a Week*, and the *Social Science Review*. The titles and statures of these journals, the editors claimed, “sufficiently indicat[ed] the general and wide-spread alarm created by Professor Gamgee’s lecturing campaign” (April 1864, 38). The editorial objective in extracting and compiling these articles was not to put forward a coherent argument in favour of vegetarianism, but to further spread the alarm. Or, as the journal itself commented, “[t]he facts that have been brought out by the discussion of this question ought to be sufficient to disgust even where they cannot convince” (April 1864, 39). The editorial tactic is clear: to disgust rather than convince. The journal connected visibility and the revelation of facts—“facts [...] have been brought out”—with social action, hoping to arouse the public through the deployment of disgust and what Patchirat terms the “politics of sight” (236). Rather than marshal sympathy and compassion, the affects associated with animal welfare, the journal made readers feel disgust as a means to mobilize their activism. Just as importantly, the journal wanted to remind readers that “the Vegetarian, at least, escapes many dangers [...] from which the meat eaters can hardly hope to escape” (April 1864, 38).

However, while the *Dietetic Reformer* ostensibly re-circulated reports from the *Times*, *Telegraph*, and other print sources in order to disgust its “meat-eating friends” (April 1861, 59), it is unlikely that too many meat-eaters actually read the vegetarian quarterly. Rather, it seems that the neatly curated and packaged extracts from other print sources were intended for vegetarian readers, not only arming them with facts and images to share with others, but also calling into being a community of the disgusted. In the *Cultural Politics of Emotion*, Sara Ahmed argues that we can read disgust as a performative speech act (*that’s disgusting!*) that constitutes not only the object, but also the subject, of disgust. And, as Ahmed adds, the speech act (*that’s disgusting!*) is not uttered in isolation or to oneself: “The speech act is always spoken to others, whose shared witnessing of the disgusting thing is required for the affect to have an effect” (94). The performativity of disgust thus “generates a community of those who are bound together through the shared condemnation of a disgusting object” (94). If Benedict Anderson has demonstrated how the press works to form “imagined communities” of readers (46), we can perhaps suggest that the *Dietetic Reformer*, by centering disgust on putrid meat, also called together a community of the disgusted, a community bound by the shared affects of moral and physical revulsion. Disgust was a mobilizing affect, used to shock the flesh-eaters, but also bind together the community of disgusted vegetarians.

The regularity of articles and reports on cattle plague in the press, coupled with the role of the newspaper as the factual record of public life, enabled the VS to insert its message into the lives of its readers and eaters, continually reaffirming the society’s community of taste. For example, the *Dietetic Reformer* often began editorials by yoking together the periodicity of the news with the prevalence of contaminated meat. A leading article in 1866 at the height of the cattle plague began,

Our readers will not require any apology for having their attention again called to the loathsome subject of ‘Diseased Meat.’ The entire press of the country is day by day

compelled to refer to the awful prevalence of the Rinderpest or Cattle Plague. (April 1866, 44)

Repetition was a key tactic that took advantage of the serial form of the press; readers again and again had their attention called to the loathsome subject of diseased meat. Furthermore, such repetition and reprinting reflected the differing publication rhythms of the quarterly journal and the daily news: as a quarterly, the *Dietetic Reformer* could collate individual articles and reports from across the general press over several months, presenting readers with a carefully curated narrative on the disgusting and dangerous state of the meat trade. As the *Dietetic Reformer* told readers in 1864, “apart from the disgust which such diet naturally inspires, circumstances come to light from time to time showing the great danger that is run by those who join in the lottery of death, which flesh-eating appears to be” (April 1864, 39). Rather than simply allude to these “circumstances” and “the lottery of death,” the *Dietetic Reformer* also actively gathered together and repackaged this “evidence” for readers, presenting them with case after case of illness, infection, and outbreak. This practice of reprinting removed individual news stories from the steady stream of information in the news media and compiled them all together, creating the impression of a bigger, widespread problem. What Susan Hamilton argues of reprinting in anti-vivisection periodicals applies to the vegetarian press: “What might be read as scattered or isolated items across a number of different media outlets are given new weight and resonance, made part of a larger social movement’s efforts, through this reprinting and bundling together” (145). Such recirculation and repackaging remained a recurrent tactic of vegetarian advocacy into the 1870s; it helped reaffirm the commitment of readers to vegetarianism and gave them the tools to defend their practice to others. The February 1874 issue began,

Scarcely a week passes, scarcely a newspaper can be taken up, but we find something about a ‘diseased meat’ case, much to the scandal of the gossips, and to the astonishment, if not consternation, of the public, who would rather not be disturbed by these unpleasant revelations. (Feb. 1874, 13).

The *Dietetic Reformer* here elides the passage of time with the reading of newspapers, suggestively identifying the newspapers' representation of reality with everyday life. Each day the press brought new scandals to light before "the public," who, of course, *did* want to be disturbed by these "unpleasant revelations"; the commercial success of newspapers and periodicals was largely founded on readers' desire to be kept up-to-date on the latest discoveries, however sensational or horrifying. To satisfy this desire, newspapers combined shocking novelty with habitual uniformity. This hunger for print was having an impact on attitudes toward meat, and the vegetarians believed the growing panic was to their advantage. It helped make food and eating constant and relevant issues in the news.

During the panic of the cattle plague, the vegetarians thus sensed an opportunity. The VS's annual report for 1866, which assessed the "losses and the panic" (2) occasioned by the plague's outbreak, noted the impetus given to vegetarianism:

Stimulated by the cattle plague, by the discussions at the British Association, and by various books and pamphlets appearing from the press, the newspapers all over the country have taken up the matter; and induced careful consideration of it in many families and social circles. Thus a number of circumstances concur to make dietetic reform one of the great questions in which the public take interest. (January 1866, 2)

The simultaneous assertion of both a crisis and an opportunity carried on in the following issue of the *Dietetic Reformer*. The leading article from April 1866, titled the "Food Crisis," suggested that the devastation of the cattle plague represented an opening for dietary reform: "this rinderpest which now appears so great an evil may, perhaps, in the end be productive of good to both man and beast" (April 1866, 35)—for "man" because it would oblige many "to be more moderate in their consumption of animal food" and teach them that meat is unnecessary (36); for the "beast" because, despite the plague's lethal effects, it promised to disrupt the cruel traffic in livestock (35).



In its discussions of the meat crisis, the *Dietetic Reformer* often put forward humane arguments on behalf of the mistreated “beasts,”<sup>46</sup> but the journal also acknowledged that arguments based on animal sentience were unlikely to convince the general public. As long as animals were valued as commodities for their “*money value*” (April 1866, 35), and as long as “popular prejudice and popular taste [were] so strongly in favour of animal food” (36), then it seemed only self-interest and the fear of contagion would compel “action in this matter” (35) and convince others to experiment with vegetarianism.

This, at least, appeared to be the message coming from the popular press, which the VS wanted to publicize and circulate. In 1862, the *Dietetic Reformer* extracted an article from the *Birmingham Daily Post*, which I have already mentioned, that reported on an address by John Gamgee in which he revealed “the amount of disease known to prevail amongst cattle” and its “injurious effects” (April 1862, 46). As the *Birmingham Daily* commented, “[s]ome of the facts which the professor mentioned were of a startling character, and rather favourable, we should say, to the extension of the Vegetarianism” (46). The *Dietetic Reformer* extracted similar sentiments and evidence from other provincial and metropolitan newspapers, while it also published its own articles on the state of the meat trade. Like general papers, the *Dietetic Reformer* derived much of its information from John Gamgee. In its April 1866 leading essay on the “Food Crisis,” it cited Gamgee and other notable authorities, such as Dr. Letheby, to illustrate the rising price and unsavory condition of the meat sold in England:

We may mention yet another cause for the present high prices of meat. The great number of cattle that die annually from pleuropneumonia and other diseases, lessens the supply, and in consequence proportionally raises the value. This is serious enough, for it is reckoned to be a total loss annually of £6,000,000; more particularly so, when we find that much of this diseased meat comes into our markets. Professor Gamgee estimates that a

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<sup>46</sup> For instance, it decried the commodification of animals: “the eating of meat is not compatible with the humane treatment of animals, for it necessitates their being considered merely as so much human food, and not as sentient beings” (April 1866, 35)

fifth part of all the meat sold is in this state; Dr. Letheby reported, a few weeks ago, that the practice of sending the carcasses of bullocks affected with the prevailing cattle disease to the markets is rapidly increasing. How far this unwholesome meat affects those who eat it, it is impossible to say exactly. (April 1866, 35-36)

Having begun by citing the hard facts—the number of cattle imported into the country, the amount lost to disease, the proportion of meat sold in an “unwholesome” state—this article then introduced a note of uncertainty, calling attention to the impossibility of determining the effects of diseased meat on eaters. As the article went on to ask, “[i]s it not likely that more ill-health is to be attributed to the eating of tainted meat than we at all imagine?” (April 1866, 36). In raising this possibility (that much more diseased meat was sold and consumed than readers knew), the *Dietetic Reformer* drew on the defining commercial convention of newspaper journalism and sensation novels: the thrill of revelation, especially the revelation of crimes in familiar domestic settings (Brantlinger 144-45). Like sensational novels and journalism, vegetarian advocacy wanted to reveal the disturbing reality that lurked beneath surface appearances. The decorum of the dinner table relied on effacing its antecedents in the slaughterhouse, but, as vegetarians repeatedly insisted, diseased meat frequently eluded the notice of market inspectors, bringing the contagion of the shambles into the home. For instance, the *Dietetic Reformer* began a later leading article on the “Dead Meat Traffic” by asking,

What would the public think if *all* such cases [of diseased meat] were actually reported; what the public would think if all that are reported over the country were put together and laid before them; what would the public further think if it were able to form any estimate of the diseased meat which is *not* seized, or of the extent to which all dead meat is, by the very system on which it is bred, necessarily more or less diseased, one dare not venture to surmise. (*DR* Feb. 1874, 13)

The aim of this discussion of the dead meat traffic was, as the editors stated, to make the public—specifically, those “who don’t care to see, who prefer to shut their eyes so that they may but gratify their appetites” (13)—feel “a little uncomfortable” (13). The objective was, in other words,

to make others feel discomfort in the most familiar and comforting of things: food. To do so, the journal again compiled a list of all the recent cases and convictions of diseased meat seizures that had been reported in newspapers. Some cases seemed trivial—we learn that in Bradford, “Thomas Blakey, aged 57, [was] choked by an oyster” (17)—while others, which described “vessels full of putrid meat” (19), were undeniably revolting. When reported in the daily papers, cases of diseased meat seemed isolated and unrelated. Extracted from the press and compiled together, this litany of putrefaction implied a widespread, systemic problem; the presentation of case after case, “put together and laid before them” (13), affected readers through its magnitude and volume. The *Dietetic Reformer* quoted one writer in the press who claimed, “[t]he amount of diseased or putrid meat consumed by the poorer classes would be simply incredible were we not assured of the fact on the best authority, and the sure evidence of statistics” (23). The facts were “incredible” because they could not be observed or verified by the lay newspaper reader; rather, the reader had to trust the statistics and authorities, such as John Gamgee, who claimed, astonishingly, that “fifty per cent of cows die or are slaughtered diseased” (Feb. 1874, 21). The *Dietetic Reformer* wanted to imply that diseased meat was a hidden reality, but also that it was a reality to which the common reader did not have access; readers had to trust scientific authority and, by extension, the newspapers that reported the facts of science.

Sowing doubt and uncertainty over the roast beef of old England became a key tactic of the *Dietetic Reformer* following the cattle plague. Some saw this as heretical: before Christmas of 1873, the *Manchester Examiner and Times* pronounced, in an article reprinted in the *Dietetic Reformer*, “[a]nyone who deliberately attempts at this festive season to weaken our faith in the virtues of roast beef, must be pronounced guilty of unpatriotic if not treasonable conduct” (*DR*, Feb. 1874, 14). As I want suggest, the VS’s attempts to weaken the faith in beef was a side effect of the professionalization by Gamgee and other veterinarians. Following the outbreak of the cattle

plague, John Gamgee legitimized veterinarian science and proved, to the minds of many, that only a trained expert could accurately distinguish between a sick and healthy animal and, more crucially, between diseased and wholesome meat. The implication of his arguments, like the implication of sensation novels, was “that everyday phenomenon as sensed by everyday persons should not be mistaken for reality” (Brantlinger 144). As Brantlinger argues, sensation novels, in developing the figure of the detective or expert interpreter, created the impression that “reality [was] no longer open to casual scrutiny or observation, but instead require[ed] the expertise of detectives or scientists to fathom” (147). The *Dietetic Reformer*, in reporting on John Gamgee’s discoveries, was not simply trying to reveal the facts and true reality that hide beneath the surface; rather, it was trying to obscure reality and cause readers to doubt their own senses: one could not tell, simply by looking or tasting, if meat was fit or unfit for human consumption. This was a common thread in the press. *All the Year Round* commented on “how impossible it is to distinguish between healthy and tainted importations of foreign cattle” (21 Dec., 1867, 39). The *Daily Telegraph*, extracted in the *Dietetic Reformer*, similarly warned its readers that “the beef [you eat] may have been from a bullock that died of pleuro-pneumonia after his arrival from Holland, and the lungs may have been full of fetid matter and poison by the pint” (April 1864, 46). Within a market economy in which animals were transported long distances and slaughtered in unknown conditions, readers could not ascertain the safety of their food, and meat became a potential carrier of contagion. The possibility that diseases might move from the meat to the meat-eater created the fear of contamination, that the human might be contaminated by the animal.

Thus, despite mid-century efforts to re-locate slaughterhouses from urban centres and physically demarcate human consumers from animals killed for food,<sup>47</sup> diseases continued to transgress this species line. In the case of diseased meat, the growing distance between humans

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<sup>47</sup> On slaughterhouse reform, see Robyn Metcalfe, *Meat, Commerce and the City: The London Food Market, 1800-1855*.

and animals was the source of danger, not the means of purification or sanitation: as veterinarian inspectors pointed out, and vegetarians emphasized, it was difficult, if not impossible, for consumers to detect whether their meat came from an animal who had been slaughtered in a state of disease. For instance, reporting on John Gamgee's lectures, the *Birmingham Daily*, extracted in the *Dietetic Reformer*, began by noting a relationship between the earlier adulteration scandals and Gamgee's investigation of meat:

The thought has often occurred to us, that if the philanthropists who display so laudable an anxiety to suppress food adulteration were to give more attention to the traffic in diseased meat, and the possibility of reform there, a much greater practical use would result from their labours. It is an evil, the extent of which is unknown to most of us, for the reason that it is generally invisible to any but the professional eye, thus realising the aphorism which may be applied to so many kindred evils—"Out of sight out of mind."  
(*DR*, Feb. 1874, 45)

As the *Birmingham Daily* suggests, "diseased meat" was "out of sight and out of mind" not simply because slaughterhouses and the labour of killing were hidden from view, but because "most of us" do not have the "professional eye" to discern diseased from healthy meat. One might assume that their interests were watched over by "responsible officers" (45), but, as the *Daily* reported, Birmingham contained over three hundred slaughterhouses and only two inspectors, only one of whom took sole responsibility for visiting the slaughterhouses. Because he was not "a veterinary surgeon," he was capable of merely distinguishing between "very good and very bad meat" (47). Nonetheless, he still made "as many as seventy-one seizures" in one year, "representing 11, 172 lbs. of diseased meat" (47). The *Daily* speculated that "were a more elaborate preventative machinery available, these figures would be very largely increased" (47). These two related claims—that only the professional eye could discern whether meat came from a diseased animal, and that the level of inspection was woefully inadequate—supported vegetarians claims that only a vegetable diet could ensure one's immunity from disease and protect one's body from

contagious animal matter. One could, the *Dietetic Reformer* suggested, trust in the machinery of government and ineffective inspectors, or one could take matters into their own hands and abstain from flesh.

The outbreak of cattle plague brought vegetarianism into public conversations and called into question longstanding association of beef with Englishness. The *Daily Telegraph*, reporting on the slaughter of diseased cattle and the fetid organs sent to sausage makers, weighed up the options facing English diners: “*Is it a question of a choice between a Vegetarian diet, starvation, and the certainty of some day coming across one of these ‘polished’ carcasses?*” (DR, April 1864, 47). In this section I have attempted to detail how such panicked press reporting opened up new tactical interventions for the VS. Importantly, the outbreak of cattle plague allowed the *Dietetic Reformer* to define its audience as a community of taste. As Highmore and Ahmed suggest, taste describes not simply an idiosyncratic or subjective whim, but an embodied set of cultural values, a way of ordering experience and attributing worth. With news appearing in the daily press on the spread of disease and sale of rotten meat, vegetarians could assert their alternative aesthetics with more confidence and use it to define themselves against others. As the *Dietetic Reformer* wrote during the cattle crisis of 1866,

we cannot but be thankful that we have seen through the flesh-fallacy; and our minds are at ease, as to where our dinners would come from, even if every head of cattle and flock of sheep were swept from the face of the earth. There would still be a rich and abundant spread for us in the wilderness. (April 1866, 46)

Dismissing meat eating as a “fallacy,” the editors here reaffirmed the collective vegetarian identity through the repeated use of the first person plural. *We* define ourselves as those who do not eat “animal corruption” (46). Importantly, *we* know where *our* dinners come from, unlike meat eaters who play the lottery of death. In this way, vegetarian advocacy became a struggle over the affects,

judgements, and feelings associated with food—in other words, over taste.<sup>48</sup> In the following section, I would like to conclude this chapter by looking at the related scandal of trichinosis and how the *Dietetic Reformer* used it to target the body.

### **“Pork and Its Perils”: To Eat or be Eaten?**

Just as Arthur Hassall’s use of the microscope revealed the frequency of adulteration, and Gamgee’s investigations of dairy sheds revealed the extent of disease among English herds, the application of microscopes to pork alerted readers to trichinae, parasitic worms that generated disturbing reports on the “Flesh Worm Disease” in the press. An article in the *Examiner* in 1879 pointed out that, although it was first observed by Richard Owen in 1835, it was not 1860 that scientists in Saxony traced the source of trichinosis to pigs. From this point on, “not merely isolated cases, but epidemics began to be reported,” causing what the *Examiner* described as “a veritable panic” (*Examiner*, 27 Dec., 1879, 1664). Notices, letters, reports, and articles on the disease appeared in the *Times*, provincial newspapers, and popular periodicals. In January 1866, the *Times* devoted three columns to cases of infectious diseases in cattle and trichinosis in pigs, highlighting the prevalence of the subject in the press (figure 4.2). The first column lamented the spread of *rinderpest* throughout the country’s agricultural districts, while the second was a letter to the editor with suggestions on how to stop its spread. The third extracted an article from the *Lancet* which called attention to “the newly observed” parasite, *trichina spiralis*, which had recently caused a series of fatal outbreaks in Germany. The headline of the article read, “The Last New Disease.” Trichinosis was new and it was news.

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<sup>48</sup> The work of Henry Salt in the later nineteenth century emphasized the aesthetic argument for vegetarianism. As he asked in his *The Logic of Vegetarianism*, “[h]ow would it be possible for the scenes that are hourly enacted in slaughter-houses to be tolerated for a moment in a community which had any real artistic consciousness?” (55). For Salt, “taste” in food went beyond the pleasures of the palate, or “the mere delicacies of cookery” (51) and included an “aesthetic appreciation of what is beautiful and pure” (51).

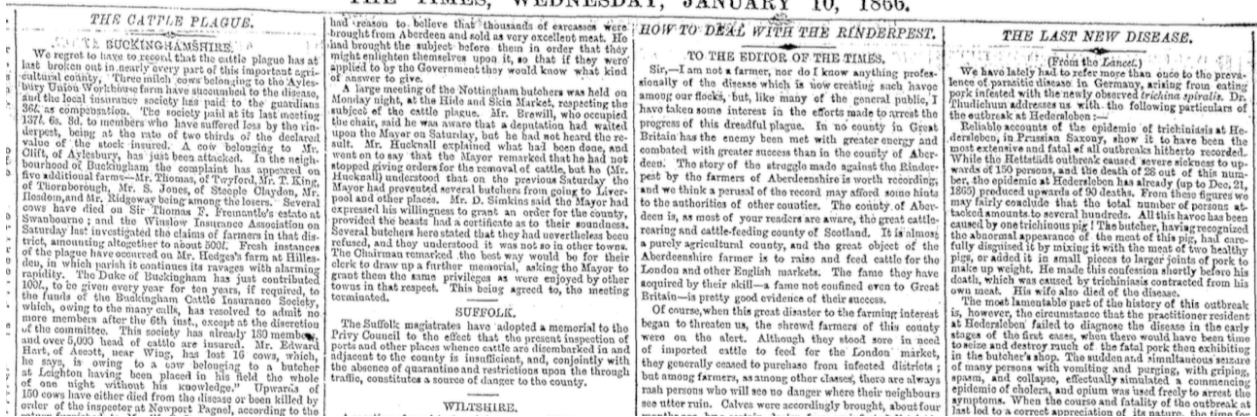


Figure 4.2: The *Times* (1866) juxtaposes a report on the outbreak of cattle plague in Buckinghamshire, a letter on how to deal with the plague or *rinderpest*, and a report on trichinosis, alerting readers to the multiple threats to their food.

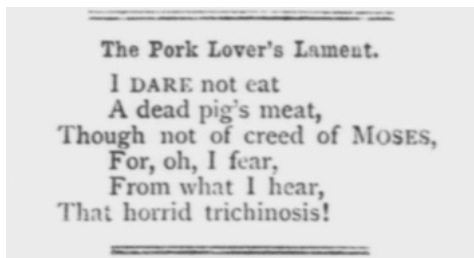


Figure 4.3: "The Pork Lover's Lament," from *Judy*, 4 May, 1881, 208

Outbreaks of trichinosis, like cases of diseased meat, lent themselves to being reported as news stories because, on the one hand, they could be quantified in the professional language of facts and statistics, while, on the other hand, they were incredible and frightening, even sensational. Reports listed the number of pounds of meat seized from merchants, the number of animals slaughtered, the rate of infection and fatality among humans, and other details from official commissions and scientific examinations. From Dr. T. Spencer Cobbold's popular lectures on trichinosis, which were reprinted in the *Dietetic Reformer*, readers and audiences learned of the strange life cycle of the parasite:

it is a tiny parasite. Small though it be, it is able to produce wonderful effects. When they have been comfortably lodged in our interior for six days, an immense number of little *Trichinae*, the progeny of the full-grown parents, make their appearance. They swarm out of the parent *Trichina* by hundreds, thousands and tens of thousands; thus collectively amounting in a single bearer to many millions [...] Their smallness, their toughness, their strength, and their armed mouths, enable them to bore directly through the walls of the



alimentary canal. They bore through the tissues, and make their way to the surface of the body; they stop at nothing; they pass through almost every structure except bone, until they arrive at the muscles. They even pass through the heart, not finding its muscular substance a suitable residence. During these wonderful wanderings or migrations you have, as it were, an army of say fifty millions of these Lilliputian creatures; and the consequence is that the unfortunate host suffers the most agonizing pains (*DR* Feb 1874, 22).

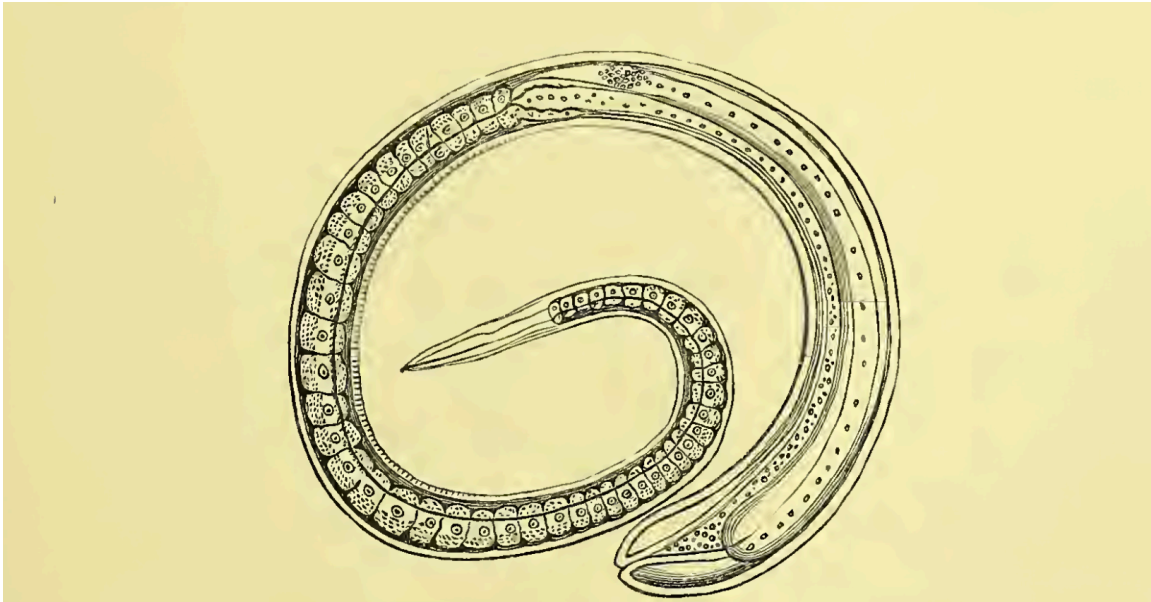
Dr. Cobbold's lecture evoked a basic fear of being eaten alive, in this case from the inside out: appearing first in the digestive tract, the microscopic creatures then penetrated through the tissues of the body, even boring their way through the heart. Trichinae thus threatened the body's integrity, demonstrating that humans too are edible meat. As Cobbold related, little difference lay between the trichina and the tiger; both were carnivores who fed on flesh.

The details of the trichinae's invasion of the body—the painful condition known as trichinosis—found their way into the press, which conveyed the facts in sensational terms. For instance, in July 1865, the *Dietetic Reformer* republished an article from the *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, which reported on a public enquiry into parasitic diseases in animal food. The article may have drawn the attention of vegetarians because it began with a brief reference to their movement: “We have not heard anything of vegetarianism for a long time” (*Sheffield Daily*, 25 May 1865, 2), it noted, suggesting that vegetarianism had indeed gone quiet in the 1860s. But, as the *Sheffield Daily* suggested, the recent report on parasitic worms in pork provided “a powerful argument to enforce their principles” (2). What made this public report so “powerful” were its magnified images of microscopic worms. The detailed narratives of the parasites' penetration of the body, complemented by diagrams of the worms' teeth (see figure 4.4), made for a sensational reading experience, provoking anxieties about bodily permeability and species boundaries:

In woodcuts one learns more than in the letterpress. They are horrible; fit to give one the nightmare—particularly if he has happened to dine or sup on any of the animals whose bodies they infest. There are serpent-looking monsters—magnified no doubt—but hideous to look upon [...] others with a boring apparatus, like a circular saw; others with a

head and a neck like a stout gimlet [...] and lastly, there's the deadly *trichina spiralis* or intestine parasite, one hundred of which have been found in the grain of human muscle. These last are fearful creatures, and a good many of the cases ending fatally—the particulars of which are given where this parasite had entered the human body make one's flesh creep as he reads. The whole subject is disagreeable, but it is highly necessary that we should be made aware of some of the startling facts disclosed by recent inquiry into the danger we run of thoughtlessly rendering ourselves liable to become the victims of the numerous parasites which prey upon animals for food (*Sheffield Daily*, 25 May 1865, 2)

This article, and others like it, emphasized the startling point that partaking of an infected animal transformed the eater into the eaten, predator into prey. Humans became food for worms: by eating meat, we “lay ourselves open to be fed upon in turn by the little creatures” (2). Thus, as the *Sheffield Daily* presents it, reading about trichinosis had a similar effect as actually having the disease: both disabled the body and overwhelmed the nervous system. The reader became paralysed with fear, reduced to a quivering piece of flesh; the consumer of the infected meat became a piece of meat, feasted upon by parasitic worms. The disease destabilized the boundary between human and animal, consumer and consumed. Popular accounts of trichinosis described the painful sensations and immobility that the disease caused: “the muscles [...] are inflamed, swollen, and everywhere painful to touch or movement. In sever cases, the patients have been described as able to lie only on their backs, their legs stretched out straight and their arms by their sides like completely paralysed or dead bodies” (*Examiner*, 27 Dec., 1879, 1665). One of the goals of vegetarians was to persuade others to show sympathy for the suffering of animals. Sensational accounts of trichinae in the popular press did more than this; they conveyed to readers an experience of what it was like to be a passive, helpless, suffering creature.



**FIG. 73.—Sexually mature female *Trichina spiralis*, from muscle. (Highly magnified.)—Leuckart.**

Figure 4.4: The magnified image of *Trichina Spiralis*, from T. Spencer Cobbold's *Entozoa: An Introduction to the Study of Helminthology* (1864). *Google Books*.

The point here is not only that the news about parasites made meat seem gross; rather, it made meat-eaters appear like weak, vulnerable prey, overturning the ideal of English masculinity. In the Victorian period, England's social and economic progress was dramatically symbolized by improvements in animal husbandry. As result, meat consumption lay at the centre of the English identity and national pride. For instance, in its account of the cattle plague's devastation, *All The Year Round* still proclaimed that the English "people" were "essentially a meat-eating people" (21 Dec. 1867, 38). However, what defined the English against its competitor nations was not only the consumption of meat, but its production: the English "beef-making animal [...] produces twice as much of the best joints as the French animal" (40). In England, "the great power of meat consumption" (40) was made possible by the fact that "we grow meat" (40) whereas in France and Germany "they allow skin, bone, meat and muscle to exist" (40). *All the Year Round* thus defined the nation not by its ability to eat animals, but by its biopolitical capacity to proliferate their flesh. But, with a dwindling domestic supply and outbreaks of disease, the habit of eating

meat appeared to compromise the security of the individual and the nation, exposing both to foreign invasions: periodicals brought stories of trichinosis epidemics in Saxony and infected pork in America, raising alarm bells about the permeability of English markets, borders, and bodies. In a comical poem about the inspection of American animals (figure 4.5), *Punch* magazine pointed out that “trichinae pass without passports” (27 Sept., 1890, 126). That is, they evaded human laws, categories of citizenship, and political calculations, crossing national borders undetected. The transmission of trichinae and the cattle plague, a side effect of global capitalism, signified what Newman described as the revolt of nature, or what Shukin (following Arturo Escobar) describes as “the irruption of the biological” (182), a defiance of the new forms of “biopower” that sought to control and commodify animal life.

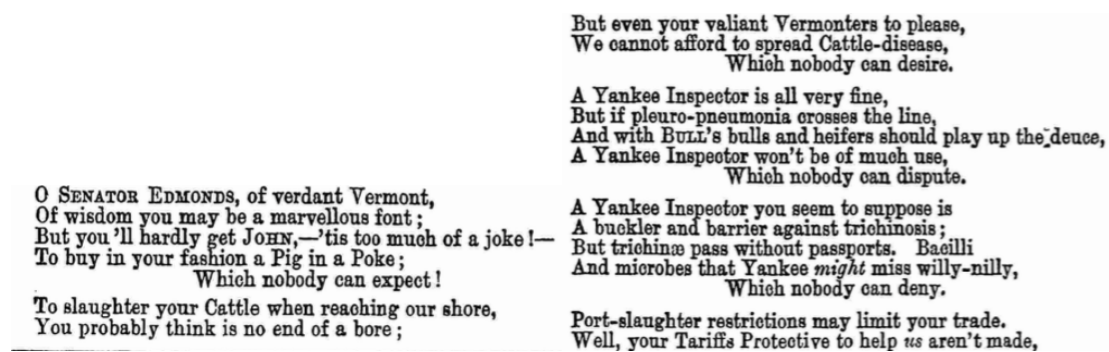


Figure 4.5: from “A Pig in A Poke,” *Punch*, 27 Sept., 1890, 126.

My suggestion is that the paralyzed and vulnerable position of consumers who ate these animals was neatly reflected and reinforced by the implied passivity of the reader of newspapers and the commercial press. Having terrified readers with accounts of the “invisible destroyers” in their food, the general press legitimized its presentation of the subject as an important social problem: we need to know the facts! The press was merely performing its duty: to represent the interests of the people. It informed them of dangers to their health, and it protected them by calling for new government legislation and new standards of inspection for slaughterhouses. This “representative function” (Hampton 10) extended the influence of scientific authority over the

lives of readers, and it positioned readers as passive consumers of print and food. As many periodicals and newspapers pointed out, detecting trichinosis required the use of a microscope and a high level of expertise. Unable to identify the threat themselves, consumers turned to the advice of professional analysts, making themselves dependent on the expert knowledge that was disseminated in the press. What Patrick Brantlinger argues of the detective in sensation novels can be adapted to the figure of the expert scientist: “From now on [...] only experts can do the serious business of reading the book of the world. But for ordinary readers there are newspapers” (147). In an article titled, “A Timely Warning,” the *Examiner*, told its readers of the imperceptible danger in their food: “meat may sometimes be full of trichinae and yet present no abnormal appearance even to a hand lens. The chances are, therefore, that trichinous pork frequently finds its way to the table” (*Examiner*, 27 Dec., 1879, 1665). By eating pork, one was playing with chance, but the *Examiner*, in another article on the subject, concluded by placing its faith in science: “To this end we should be protected, not by the haphazard and rule-of-thumb kind of meat inspections which now prevails, but by scientific examination efficiently carried out by skilled experts” (17 April, 1880, 497). Only the expert could reveal the worms lurking beneath the surface. The common observer could no longer trust his or her own senses or tastes in determining what was good to eat. In this way, the scientist gained an influential role in everyday life, but it may also have been good business for newspapers: reporting on the dangers of eating (that is, making eating appear to depend on reading) helped to ensure that the public would return for each issue; it interweaved food and print consumption.

The creation of a passive reader, who depended on the expert knowledge sold in newspapers, may have had commercial incentives, and it may in part also have derived from the desire of both scientists and journalists to present themselves as professionals who commanded the facts before an amateur audience. But it also had the indirect effect of emboldening

vegetarians, and informing their tactics. In the context of radical uncertainty and fear of contamination, the vegetarians presented themselves as free agents, capable of managing their own health without the protection of doctors, scientists, or government regulation. As the Reverend James Clark reported at the Twenty-Second Annual Meeting,

The whole press of the country, aided by town councils and their officers, continue to keep one view of our subject before the public, by prosecutions for exposing or selling diseased meat, and by frequent reports of the practices resorted to with considerable success to get the diseased carcasses into consumption. From the perils of ignorance and knavery in this direction Vegetarians are happily free (*DR*, Jan. 1872, 2).

In contrast to vegetarian freedom, meat eating brought a of loss of agency and self-control: on the one hand, the meat-eater risked becoming infected with a parasite that took over the body; on the other hand, the flesh-eater's only hope for security required entrusting the management of his or her health to a higher authority: the newspaper, scientist, or public health inspector. One vegetarian reader saw this as a call to action. As he wrote to the *Dietetic Reformer*,

Those who have given up the use of animal food cannot but sympathise with those who fear to give up what they consider an absolute necessity, but who now fear and tremble as they eat. Flesh-eaters are being led into new and unknown, but shortly to be known and felt morbid states, by the consumption of diseased meat. The only relieving consideration is that Vegetarianism 'commands the position' as it never did before. Hundreds, thousands there must be now who need but the barest touch of the finger of truth to cause them to drop away from the flesh-eating ranks. Vegetarians, therefore, should come to the fore; they can expect no more powerful conjunction of forces than is here presented to them. (*DR*, Jan. 1876, 11)

As I have suggested, it was the periodical press that led flesh-eaters to fear and tremble as they ate; factual, yet sensational, reporting on trichinosis and other disease intended readers to both know and feel the disease. As the *Dietetic Reformer* asserted, "henceforth 'fear and trembling' may well represent the state of mind in which pork can appropriately be eaten" (April 1864, 40). The pork-eaters' trembling position seems to have produced and emboldened the activity of vegetarians such as this correspondent. Vegetarians cited, reprinted, and publicized reports and

pamphlets on contagious diseases not only to strike fear into the meat-eater, but also to inspire the agency and participation of their fellow food reformers.

That is, the VS capitalized on the trichinosis sensation in a way that not only emphasized the fear and trembling of the pork-eaters but also invited the participation of its members. In addition to reprinting newspaper reports, it published a pamphlet, “Pork and Its Perils,” which detailed the analysis of trichinae-infested pig flesh, using the revelations made possible by microscopes to transform an ordinary commodity (pork) into an object of abject revulsion. Where the general press, such as *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, positioned readers as helpless, passive victims, “Pork and Its Perils” enlisted their involvement, both in the examination of the “fleshworms” and in vegetarian advocacy. The pamphlet, which went through several additions,<sup>49</sup> adopted the conversational tone of popular science (Lightman 49), guiding readers through an imagined examination of a pig. Using the informal second person, the speaker addressed the reader directly and invited him or her along to analyze and observe the animal’s condition. By adopting this convention of popular science books, the anonymous author drew the reader into the process of discovery: “Let us examine the hog a little, and see what we can determine respecting his true nature [...] Gaze at that object [ . . . ] we will show you a dozen things you did not observe before” (3). The author thus adopts the persona of a paternalistic mentor, who stands on “the threshold of knowledge,” leading his readers into the realm of scientific study (Lightman 125). The main trope is one of unveiling through close observation; this pursuit of knowledge serves to disgust, to disturb the palate and upset conventional tastes: “If you can prevail upon yourself to sacrifice your taste in the cause of science, just clamber over into the reeking sty and take a nearer view of the animal that is destined to delight the palates of some of your friends [...] observe closely” (4).

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<sup>49</sup> I viewed the third edition (1881) in the British Library, but, according to advertisements in the *Vegetarian Messenger*, the VS was continuing to put out new editions as late as 1897.

The examination reveals, according to the narrator, external sores, a mass of corruption pouring out, which the text describes as a sewer, a body teeming with filth. The animal is represented as an unsanitary, overflowing city, with its “ichorous matter” communicated by little pipes throughout its body (4). This external examination of the pig proceeds to a biopsy; dissection of the carcass reveals excess fat—“your slice of pork fat is consolidated filth” (4)—as well as scrofula, tape worm, and trichinosis: “Upon closer inspection, it will be no uncommon thing if we discover numberless little sacs, or cyst, about the size of a hemp seed” inside of which is a “little animal” that attaches itself to the wall of the intestine and begins to grow, laying millions of eggs. Boring through the intestine, the “parasites penetrate every part of the body [...] finding their way to the most delicate structures of the human system” and all organs of the body (7). The “little animal” penetrates the human, and violates the species boundary: the pamphlet thus plays on fears of filth and violation, the transgression of membranes and boundaries, and infection from the nonhuman animal, all the while relating these dangers in the conversational tone favoured by popular science:

Now, my friend, assist your eyesight by a good microscope, and you will be convinced that you have only just caught a glimpse of the enormous filthiness of this loathsome animal. Take a thin slice of lean flesh, place it on the stage of your microscope, adjust the eye-piece and look [...] you will find displayed before your eyes hundreds of voracious little animals, each coiled up in its little cell waiting for an opportunity to escape. (8)

Authors of popular science commonly encouraged their readers to procure basic scientific equipment, such as telescopes or microscopes, to participate in experiments (Lightman 125). This participation had a commercial function as the books themselves were often bundled in advertisements for such devices. In the case of “Pork and Its Perils,” the participatory spirit of the popular genre complemented and extended to the role of vegetarian activism; enlightened readers who had personally learned of pork’s perils were then compelled to take on the mantle of the mentor, share their knowledge with others, and recirculate the pamphlet. Readers were asked to “inform their flesh-eating friends” of the dangers of the “fleshworm” and emphasize “the horrors



of the disease” (*DR* April 1864, 40). The *Dietetic Reformer*, for instance, frequently called upon its readers to distribute its literature, calling attention to its current list of pamphlets: “‘How to Marry and Live Well on a Shilling a Day,’ ‘Pork and its Perils,’ ‘The Penny Cookery,’ ‘How to Spend Sixpence,’ and ‘Food for the Million’ are saleable from any bookseller’s counter or window” (January 1883, 7). The distribution of this literature was “doubly helpful” (7) because it increased the VS’s finances and instructed others in its doctrines. As the journal emphasized, “*this* agency of teaching is one which cannot be too strongly commended to the attention of our friends everywhere” (Jan. 1883, 7). Vegetarian readers were vegetarian agents, and their agency, their desire to “come to the fore” (*DR*, Jan. 1876, 11), was reinforced through its contrast with the passivity, fear, and trembling of the flesh eaters.

It is difficult to recover exactly how readers used and circulated pamphlets, but letters in correspondence sections of the journal suggest that readers did take on this “agency of teaching” (Jan. 1883, 7), even if these letters were selectively published. For instance, one reader, describing his family as models of vegetarian living, also offered a model for how to share pamphlets:

I and my family are examples of how persons can live without flesh meat, strong drinks, or tobacco, and we do a little by circulating the tracts and publications of the Society. I desire to do more, and hope soon to get others to join me. The tract on the ‘Perils of Pork,’ of which I distributed several, has opened the eyes of many; they do not eat pork so comfortably as they formerly did. Here we are surrounded with orchards, and apples are abundant. I wish the farmers would learn how to use them without converting them into cider.—J. L. (*DR*, October 1883, 290).

It is easy to see why the editors may have selected this letter for publication: its author offers a model for how to live as an active vegetarian, one who both exemplifies and proselytizes the fleshless life. Whether or not this letter accurately reflects how vegetarians lived their lives, it offers at least some indication of how the journal *imagined* they lived and advocated. We see here how the panic and fear over infectious diseases and parasites had the dual effect of undermining

confidence in meat, or making people less comfortable in eating it, and of drawing out the participation of vegetarians, involving them in the movement and reaffirming their commitment and beliefs. They took the cattle disease and trichinosis as signs that vegetarianism was indeed the diet of the future.

## **Conclusion**

The importation of foreign cattle and pigs, the spread of disease among herds, and the subsequent circulation of “diseased meat” among the masses, created a public sensation that spread throughout the press. Fears over contamination generated new feelings about food that impacted upon the borders of the individual body and the social body: with the liberalization of trade and abolition of tariffs in the 1842 and 1846, foreign animals began crossing the channel, entering both the ports of the nation and the mouths of individuals, a transgression of borders that in turn led to fears of financial disaster and species-crossing contamination. Interestingly, the loosening of protectionism over national borders brought about an imagined breakdown of species borders as animal diseases and parasites threatened to enter human bodies. Vegetarians actively called attention to this breakdown of species borders during the cattle plague panic: as the *Dietetic Reformer* wrote in its lead article, “It seems to us that it will almost require a miracle to prevent the taint, the contagion, or the inoculation extending to the human species” (*DR*, April 1866, 45). For vegetarians, however, the arrival of the cattle plague was not a disaster; it was a confirmation of all their beliefs and everything they had argued about the superiority of eating vegetables. The VS believed that, with rising prices and spreading diseases, the conditions were favourable for extending their practice to others. Through the reprinting and recirculation of information and intelligence, the *Dietetic Reformer* sought to demonstrate the precariousness and uncertainty of eating meat, presenting it as “a lottery of death” (April 1864, 39). These tactics took hold during the 1860s when the VS was in decline, and they served to consolidate the vegetarian community

of taste, and keep vegetarianism in the public, at time when it was losing adherents. In the following chapter, I offer a closer examination of how Francis Newman, as President of the VS, reformed its structure and gave rise to what became known as the vegetarian revival.

## 5. Newman's Conversion: Francis William Newman, Government by Diet, and Vegetarianism on the Instalment Plan

In April 1868, the *Dietetic Reformer* announced that Francis William Newman (1805-1897), the younger brother of John Henry Newman (1801-1890), had “become a convert to the Vegetarian principle” (April 1868, 33). In 1873, the VS appointed Newman as its president, a position he held until age forced him to retire in 1884. This chapter examines the conflicts and factionalism that emerged within the VS during Newman's tenure. While the *Dietetic Reformer*, by publishing his conversion narrative on its front page, aimed to capitalize on the celebrity of the Newman name, Newman himself wanted to reform the VS's structure and membership, a campaign that brought him into conflict with its old guard.

If the VS found difficulty in making new converts, it was because, Newman argued, daily routine and cultural rituals inhibited the adoption of new habits. At the 1871 annual soiree of the VS, Newman told his fellow vegetarians that they “were aiming at something very difficult, because they were aiming to induce persons to give up many of their fixed and permanent habits of life” (*DR*, Feb. 1872, 17). In order to effect the habituation of vegetarianism in new converts, Newman appealed to the concept and practice of serialization, using the genre of the serial to mobilize social action. As I noted in chapter one, scholars of the press, such as Laurel Brake and Mark Turner, have called attention to the way in which, in Turner's words, the periodical press “provides the rhythms of modernity” and structures the “patterns of everyday life” (185). The periodicity of the press corralled together niche communities of readers and allowed them to define themselves through shared temporal patterns of consumption: as Hopwood, Shaffer, and Secord note, in the nineteenth century “people increasingly defined themselves around choices of serial consumption: which newspaper did they read, at which times of day did they eat, which meetings did they attend, which fashions did they follow?” (277). Rather than see reading, eating,

and meeting as distinct and unrelated instances of serial consumption, I want to demonstrate how Newman, as President of the VS, yoked together all three. Periodic meetings, monthly magazines, and daily meals framed the process of becoming a vegetarian.

As president, Newman introduced controversial reforms to the society's membership structure that he modelled on seriality. He advocated admitting "partial vegetarians" to the VS ("VEM" 16), creating what I call vegetarianism on the instalment plan. Membership, as we saw in chapter three, originally required a declaration of strict abstinence from flesh food—it required, in other words, that one embody vegetarianism and live out its moral code—but Newman proposed shaping the conduct of others through "a series of avowals, in steps upwards" (*DR*, Feb. 1872, 11), leading in the direction of vegetarianism. Newman saw serialization as the means to mould conduct; his "series of pledges" (*Essays* 75) created three tiers of membership (members, associates, and subscribers), introducing a temporal sequence into the process of converting to vegetarianism. Arguing that habits develop slowly, he advocated gradual changes, or what I call serialized vegetarianism. A member adopted the diet, subscribed to the magazine, and had the right to run for positions in the VS, while an associate subscribed to the magazine and promoted the diet but had no voting privileges and no obligation to abstain from animal products completely. A subscriber had even fewer responsibilities, simply paying the subscription for the magazine with no obligations to practice or promote. Like the practice of purchasing a published volume or book in serial instalments, graduated membership avoided the upfront commitment, appealing to a stratified public of differing financial means and levels of engagement. Newman deployed the economy of serialization to guide the behaviour of beginners toward the internalization and replication of vegetarian practice. The cultural rhythms of serialization, in part-issues and in periodicals, organized the way in which texts were marketed and consumed, but also offered a way of directing individuals on the road to vegetarian pastures. Just as one could buy

Mrs. Beeton's *Book of Household Management* in regular parts, one could gradually, periodically become a vegetarian, moving from the position of the neophyte to the complete works.

Formed in 1847, the VS developed into what I have called a “conversionist” social reform movement, a movement predicated on the belief that individuals had to change themselves and their lives. The focus on the individual and on individual responsibility, as Brian Harrison, Mary Poovey, Lauren Goodlad, and Amanda Claybaugh have all argued, characterized nineteenth-century social reform. According to Victorian liberal ideology, argues Goodlad, “social improvement ultimately derives from the personal efforts of individuals” (15), not the government. Newman, who held anti-statist positions and defended the freedom of the individual conscience (*Miscellanies* 391), exhibited faith in social reform by personal self-reform. Furthermore, his model of serialized conversion and ethical consumerism—that is, his belief that small changes in quotidian practices could effect wider social and political changes—suggest a liberal, noninterventionist theory of governing others, a belief in voluntary self-help. However, in this chapter I also highlight areas where Newman drew attention to the limits of liberal self-reform, particularly in the case of vegetarianism. Eating habits are social and cultural; they are not owned or authored individually, but are formed dialogically. They arise in the interstitial spaces between subjects. To quote Jacques Derrida, “one never eats entirely on one’s own” (“Eating Well” 115). Eating is an activity that exceeds the individual; to eat is to take the outside inside, to blur the distinction between self and other in the very process of constituting the self (Kilgour 7). One always eats with and of the other, argues Derrida (“Eating Well” 115). I suggest that, for Newman, conversion to vegetarianism could not simply take the form of a solitary, personal act. He came to see it as an inherently dialogic, collective process, and for this reason he argued that the VS needed restructuring. He wanted to change how the VS enculturated and incorporated outsiders into its fold. His ideas were based on the problem of hospitality: to make converts,

vegetarians had to sit down and eat with others. Rather than retreat within myths of their own moral and physiological purity, they would have to let outside world in. According to the VS's statistics, his relaxed approach to conversion greatly expanded the society's list of contributors.

My methodological approach in this chapter is straightforward: in the absence of extensive digital tools to mine for data, I follow Linda K. Hughes in reading serial print media “sideways” or sequentially, “searching periodicals page by page, issue by issue” (7).<sup>50</sup> By reading laterally across multiple issues and volumes of the *Dietetic Reformer*, I unfold the history of how Newman's interaction with the VS was represented in its print culture. Such a sustained—and serial—reading of a single title calls attention to “the offline penumbra” that Patrick Leary defines as “that increasingly remote and unvisited shadowland into which even quite important texts fall if they cannot yet be explored, or perhaps even identified, by any electronic means” (82). Maria DiCenzo has recently suggested that keeping the “offline penumbra” on the radar through critical readings of social movement media resists the exclusions and historical blind spots that result from the digitization and canonization of select titles:

Periodicals produced as part of early reform campaigns or social movements, or by marginalized and oppressed groups, are not likely candidates for digitalization on a large scale, so detailed critical studies are crucial to making them visible. If the focus on the discursive dimension of the media does not seem strikingly new, the findings are. (DiCenzo 35)

Like the suffragette periodicals DiCenzo analyzes, the *Dietetic Reformer* is also not a likely candidate for digitalization on a large scale. This chapter on Newman's serialized vegetarianism is thus part recovery work. But I also hope that, by noting the importance of the periodical format in shaping vegetarianism, I can elaborate a model of agency that attributes the dissemination of ideas and social movements to their medium (the serial) and not only their supposed creators or authors.

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<sup>50</sup> The *Dietetic Reformer and Vegetarian Messenger* has now been sporadically digitized by Google Books (the years 1883 to 1885), while early volumes of the *Vegetarian Messenger* have appeared on archive.org. My work on Francis William Newman derives from research I conducted in the archives of the VS in October 2011.

Indeed, Newman was unenthusiastic pastor or leader, sceptical of his own presidency. He saw the practice and production of vegetarianism as a dialogue, one made possible by the periodical press. Hence, although this chapter centres on Newman, I organize it around his interactions with print media, which I hope will allow me to construct a history not only of the vegetarian movement's leaders, but of the cultural form that enabled it to advance.

### **Anti-Everything: Newman's Contrarianism**

*Vegetarianism is hardly a system that can be taken seriously in England.*  
—*The Times*, 13 January 1885

The lesser-known younger brother of Cardinal John Henry Newman, Francis William Newman is often remembered today through the literary criticism of Matthew Arnold, who, while serving as Professor of Poetry at Oxford, took issue with Newman's "needlessly antiquated and uncouth" translation of Homer (*National Review*, Oct. 1860, 292). But, as U.C. Knoepfelmacher notes, in the middle of the nineteenth century Newman hardly seemed destined to end up as a mere footnote to the work of his younger contemporary (9). Fluent in seventeen languages, Newman's erudition and scholarship commanded respect, but his critical scrutiny of the laws and morals of his time also alienated him from many acquaintances, including his brother. Following the 1850 publication of his *Phases of Faith*, a rigorous examination of his religious beliefs, Newman found himself at the centre of mid-Victorian theological controversies, vilified by evangelicals and defended by the *Westminster Review*. Newman seems to have thrived on such opposition, and he extended his criticism of religion to secular realms, becoming a combative commentator on history, politics, and society. As Newman wrote in 1844 to a friend, Dr. John Nicholson, he felt most comfortable when in "direct conflict with current opinion [...] My antagonism to 'things as they are'—politically, scientifically, and theologically—grows with my growth; and I believe that



every year that delays change more and more endangers destruction to our social framework” (Sieveking 139). Throughout his life, Newman embodied this untiring and continual protest against “things as they are” (139). In the 1840s he supported the anti-Corn Law League, while in 1870 he joined the cause to repeal the Contagious Diseases Act. His other political activities included anti-vivisection, abolition, land nationalisation, women’s suffrage, and teetotalism. At the age of sixty-two, he took up the cause of vegetarianism.

Newman was thus known for his contrarianism. In her *Memoirs and Letters of Francis Newman*, Sieveking quotes a family friend, Mr. George Grey Butler, who recalled, “I remember once at table Mr. Newman saying (when asked his attitude on various public questions), ‘Oh, I am anti-slavery, anti-alcohol, anti-tobacco, anti-*everything!*’ with a twinkle in his eye which caused an outburst of mirth among his listeners” (139). Rather than provide mirth and conversation at the table, however, Newman’s decision later in life to include “anti-flesh meat” among his many “*Antis*” (314) turned the dinner table into a potential site of conflict. Indeed, when he converted to vegetarianism, Newman’s principal concern was with companionship—that is, the breaking of bread.<sup>51</sup> Newman feared that a strict vegetable diet would lead to social alienation, or as he wrote to the VS, “would put me out of harmony with all in my household, as well as with my friends, making me as troublesome as a Jew or a Brahmin” (36). His comments here draw attention to the foreignness of vegetarianism and the centrality of food in the formation of cultural identity; becoming a vegetarian alienated one from the beef-eating, Christian community.

Historians who mention his late turn toward vegetarianism<sup>52</sup> regard it as a further growth of his antagonistic spirit and a sign of his eccentricity, not as a serious act of social reform. Such a

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<sup>51</sup> Donna Haraway elaborates on the etymology of “companion” to articulate her theory of co-evolutionary “companion species.” “Companion,” as Haraway point outs, derives from the Latin, *cum panis* or “with bread” (17). “Companion species” are those who break bread together, becoming biologically and evolutionary entangled.

<sup>52</sup> And they do tend only to mention it. See for instance Basil Wiley’s discussion of Newman. The notable exception is Gregory, who provides an historical overview of the VS during the period of its revival, including Newman’s involvement (52-55, 61)

negative view of vegetarianism fails to account for its productive elements and the social and historical reasons that, Newman argued, compelled its adoption, reasons to which I return below. Furthermore, the dualistic view of Newman in opposition to general society does not take into account the way in which he also brought his contrarian spirit to the heart of the VS, opening up internal divisions and conflicts within it. Newman demonstrates that social movements do not stand in static opposition to an external foe, but also struggle internally over objective and tactics, changing their position over time. Newman was anti-flesh meat, but he also did not unreservedly embrace vegetarianism. In public spaces such as the Friends' Society and the press, he advocated vegetarianism and criticized the fetishization of animal flesh, but, internally, his correspondence and addresses at the VS's annual meetings provoked debate and internal strife. They reveal Newman's discontent with the name and constitution of the VS and his attempts to liberalize its rules, making it more open and less sectarian. Much the way he critiqued religious movements for believing in their own perfection, Newman warned his vegetarian colleagues not to assume a position of blameless moral superiority. At the May Meetings of 1884, Newman told the assembly that "[t]heir position was not a final one, but it was an improved position" (*DR* July 1884, 189-90). Vegetarianism was one practical step in the right direction, but not the irreproachable or final resting place, and he enjoined his fellow vegetarians not to disparage those who had not (yet) adopted their diet.

Newman set down his views on vegetarian advocacy in a letter to the editor of the *Times* in January 1885, using the opportunity to make a pointed, almost exasperated, critique of his fellow vegetarians:

Personally, I have striven to remind our friends that our aim is not to found a sect but to influence a nation—indeed, to influence a Christian civilization, and that we ought to rejoice in implanting our germs for future expansion than in rearing sporadic entire converts. We know what the family table and mutual conviviality imply, and how to fear dislocation of connexions by strange food (20 Jan. 1885, 6).

In the largest newspaper of England, Newman broke rank from the VS: addressing himself to the editors of the *Times*, he indirectly issued a reminder, or even a warning, to his fellow vegetarians, whom he referred to here as “our friends.” That is, Newman, writing in the public space of the *Times*, defended vegetarianism, but also included a message to the small circle of vegetarians. His meaning was clear: rather than try to make complete, yet sporadic, converts, he felt their efforts would be better put to use convincing more people to eat less meat, leading them incrementally toward vegetarianism. Vegetarians, he suggested, were too concerned with cultivating their own sect of pure eaters; they would not make new converts or reach new audiences if they aspired to live and eat in isolation. Knowing the potential influence of a discussion in the *Times*, Newman was concerned about the public image of vegetarianism: if the diet appeared to be too strict and difficult, few outsiders would ever experiment with it and discover its practicality.

The need for internal reform derived from the implications of what Newman called “the family table and conviviality” (*Times*, 20 Jan. 1885, 6). Newman stressed the intertwined cultural and economic value of meat, its centripetal pull in social rituals. The fear of alienation (or “dislocation”) on the one hand, and the binding force of “mutual conviviality” (6) on the other, impeded many vegetarian sympathizers from carrying out their convictions. Food anchored one’s sense of belonging, while eating “strange food” (6) left one estranged. For this reason, Newman saw “the family table” (6) as the key site of struggle, and he oriented vegetarian advocacy toward “future expansion” (6) rather than immediate conversion. His reformed approach threatened to erode the rigid identity of vegetarianism; strict vegetarians regarded it as heretical insofar as it implied advocating a diluted platform of dietary reform rather than outright abstinence.

Published in 1885, his comments in the *Times*—particularly the claim that “I striven to remind our friends...”—allude to his many years of contesting the aims of the VS, and they draw our attention to the society’s internal divisions. From his early experiments with the diet, Newman

criticized the VS's doctrinaire approach, which, he felt, ignored practical considerations of the table. In 1868, he told the *Dietetic Reformer* "if your society will press abstractions and extreme views less, and practical arguments more, they may convert many more beside me" (April 1868, 36). In what follows, I detail the ways in which Newman strove to redirect the aims of the VS away from sectarianism and toward a broader basis of reform. But, before analysing Newman's interventions into vegetarian food reform, I believe it will be useful to outline the reasons that first compelled him to study the diet, reasons that distanced him from orthodox vegetarianism. If the VS saw Newman as the means to gain greater publicity for its movement, Newman wanted to use the VS to reform what he saw as the iniquitous distribution of the land. I want to demonstrate briefly that Newman based his personal practice of vegetarianism on a structural analysis of society, in which he tied the production and consumption of animals to the system of land tenure, a system which, Newman contended, was based historically on conquest and theft rather than the principle of justice (*DR*, March 1872, 33).

### **Newman's Government by Diet**

*With the progress of population Vegetarianism naturally increases. I do not say which is the cause and which the effect; they react on one another.*

—Francis Newman, "Lecture on Vegetarianism or the V.E.M. Diet."

In his early communications with the VS, Newman claimed that the question that led one to vegetarianism was simple: "Which diet is best for us? [...] If fruits, berries, grains, and roots be better, cheaper, and require less area of soil; that suffices, without undertaking to prove that flesh is intrinsically bad" (April 1868, 37). Newman did not necessarily believe that meat was intrinsically bad or unhealthy; humans had, after all, eaten it for centuries. He saw no reason to believe that "the North American Indian or the South American Spanish Gauchos" (*DR*, March 1872, 37) were any "less healthy or long-lived than frugivorous races" (37). Nor did he see

vegetarianism as a timeless moral imperative. When he asked, *what diet is best for us?*, Newman, unlike earlier vegetarians, was not in search for the one true diet of humankind. Instead, he saw “us” as an historically-situated plural subject; in the wake of the 1865 cattle plague outbreak, Newman turned to vegetarianism as an economically efficient diet that could, potentially, solve a set of historically specific problems that derived from the collision of industrial capitalism with the management of nonhuman animals. Newman’s advocacy of vegetarianism was governmental insofar as he saw guiding the dietary choices of others as an indirect way of shaping the moral and economic constitution of the social body.

In an 1871 lecture on vegetarianism before the Friends’ Institute, Newman characteristically began with another simple question: “What *is* the use of it [vegetarianism]?” (DR, March 1872, 33)—a question that of course implies vegetarianism must have utility. Contesting the common assumption that it had no use, Newman’s lecture framed vegetarianism within the values of liberal governmentality. According to Foucault, nineteenth century liberalism defined itself by self-reflexively posing the question of utility: “[w]hat is the utility value of government and all government actions in a society where exchange determines the value of things?” (*Biopolitics* 46). Newman essentially asked, what is the utility value of vegetarianism in a society where exchange determines the value of things? His question contrasts instructively with Henry Salt’s *Animals’ Rights*, a treatise which Salt began by asking, “[h]ave the lower animals rights?” (1). Salt started with the language of rights to place external limitations on human actions (by affording rights to animals). Newman began from the premise of government and the problems posed by a population. Amid the cattle plague and fears over the food supply, Newman asked, what is the utility of vegetarianism in governing the social body? Where Salt saw vegetarian self-reform as a moral obligation (regardless of its utility), Newman rationalized it as a tactic of economic efficiency. Newman asked, *what is the best diet for us?* not, *what are the rights of animals?* In a

society where exchange determined the value of things, the utility of vegetarianism derived from the market and the price of butchers' meat (*DR*, March 1872, 33).

For Newman food was political. Two of the greatest problems facing the nation—the outbreak of cattle murrain and the high price of meat—were dietary, pastoral, and ecological problems, problems that concerned the management of human bodies in relation to animals and the land. According to Newman, the increased demand for meat not only spread disease among herds; it also created an inequitable distribution of land. The high price and demand allowed landowners to use their land for grazing animals rather than employing labourers. As Newman argued in his Friends' Institute lecture, “demand of the wealthy towns for cattle and their products [...] makes it worth a landlord's while to keep arable land in pasture” (*DR*, March 1872, 38). Newman feared the depopulation of the countryside, and attributed it partly to a flesh-based agricultural system which employed fewer people. Whereas herding animals required only a few shepherds, fruit and grain cultivation would employ an army of labourers, or so he claimed.

In his early lectures and essays on political economy one can find the seeds of his late turn to vegetarianism. In them, Newman lamented that land was used to raise, grow and feed sheep and cattle, not humans.<sup>53</sup> After he converted to vegetarianism, Newman continued to emphasize “the land question,” taking aim at the law, landowners, and aristocratic game hunters. As he argued in an essay on the relationship between the food supply and land tenure, the legal system continued to support what he called an iniquitous distribution of the land:

The open fact is that the law enables a landlord at his own will simply to forbid cultivation, to eject the cultivators and all human population except a few gamekeepers or shepherds; this very thing is actually done, and with impunity. Will it be pretended that the

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<sup>53</sup> Karl Marx was not a vegetarian, nor was Newman Marxist, but they overlap on the issues of land appropriation and the production of a “redundant” population. In *Capital*, Marx quotes Newman's *Lectures On Political Economy* to articulate the injustices of land expropriation (884). What Marx describes as the violent usurpation of the common lands, the concentration of agricultural capital, and the creation of a landless proletariat, was accompanied by the transformation of arable land into pasture for sheep and cattle: “The usurpation of the common lands allowed the farmer to augment greatly his stock of cattle, almost without cost” (Marx 906). As Newman argued, it was more profitable to raise and support cattle than humans.

sheep or rabbits or deer, which multiply over the area vacated by man, afford to us by their carcasses food equivalent to the lost crops? (*Essays on Diet*, 100).

Appealing to parliament to remedy the unjust distribution of land was useless insofar as the legislature “consisted of landholders who were voting for their own private gain to the serious damage of the community” (98). Newman thus maintained that “a landlord’s legal rights are excessive and unjust” (*DR*, March 1872, 40), but he acknowledged that reforming these legal rights would be difficult, requiring “vast changes, both in Land Tenure and in public opinion concerning Rights in Land” (March 1872, 40). Optimistically, Newman saw vegetarianism as an extra-parliamentary means of restructuring the economy and land use. Without directly addressing the state, the practice of vegetarianism would, he believed, create demand for vegetable crops, and “give healthy impetus to wise and just views on the subject [of land tenure]” (March 1872, 40). Here we have almost a definition of liberal government as the conduct of conduct: vegetarianism would not directly change the law, but would induce and give rise to new forms of self-government and social practice. Advocating vegetarianism was an indirect way of advocating land reform. Newman imagined that a change in diet could create better civic subjects and bring about a more equitable system of resource distribution. It was, he contended, in the best interest of landowners to admit these reforms, for wherever “the land laws were unjust” (*DR*, July 1884, 209) the threat of revolution appeared; thus, as he told an audience in 1884, “look more to fruit in the future, and employ labour on the land instead of driving people into the towns” (209). The widespread adoption of vegetarianism, and a corresponding increase in demand for vegetables and fruit, would return the land to crop cultivation and small freeholdings, drawing workers from overpopulated cities back to the countryside: “the movement toward Vegetarianism would be a movement toward native cultivation and rustic industry” (March 1872, 38). The collective movement toward vegetarianism would also produce more food, as he argued in *Essays on Diet*: “[t]he food which cattle eat displaces human food which the same fields might have grown” (5).

Newman advocated government by vegetarianism: he did not make legal arguments about land tenure, or about animals' rights; instead, he pointed out that vegetarianism would make the system of land theft and animal exploitation impossible: "I do not stop to argue the question of law and right [...] but I insist, that if we were a Vegetarian nation, the whole thing would be impossible" (*DR*, March 1872, 39). Newman argued that by inducing others to eat differently, to eat the direct productions of the land, vegetarians could restructure social and economic life, reversing the effects of industrialization.

In this section I have detailed *why* Francis Newman advocated and practiced vegetarianism, but I have only begun to address *how*. Newman saw benefits in vegetarianism for individuals and the population, but how did he conduct or guide others toward the practice? This question will occupy the remainder of this chapter. His first tactic was to present himself as an example of vegetarianism. Before Newman could advocate vegetarianism "to the masses of nation" (*DR*, April 1868, 36), he determined to experiment with it on his own body: as he wrote to the editors of the *Dietetic Reformer*, "I saw that if an example was useful, I ought to set it myself,—If I *could*, without loss of health or grave inconvenience" (April 1868, 36). The personal was political for Newman. Newman used his body as the testing ground for vegetarianism. Referring to himself as "physiologically a very unhopeful subject" (April 1868, 35), he claimed that "[i]f even I can become a Vegetarian, the vast majority of people can, old or young" (35). Perhaps arrogantly, Newman made his individual body stand in for the social body, believing that if vegetarianism suited him, it would suit everyone. Whereas Foucault links biopolitics to the emergence of the modern state governments (*History of Sexuality* 25), Newman's self-experimentation allows us to see that in nineteenth-century biopolitics was also practiced by private individuals who used the terrain of their own flesh to work out the problem of the population. He did not envision directly



orchestrating the diets of others (in prisons, schools, workhouses, or soup-based philanthropy). Instead, he wanted to shape the conduct of others through his own self-transformation.

While Newman's attempts to change the diet of the masses may sound disciplinary and paternalistic (which indeed they are), we must remember Newman's audience. Newman did not address the millions; he spoke before small audiences of like-minded social reformers. His immediate aim was to change *their* conduct, not that of the masses. At the Friends' Institute in Manchester, he called upon his audience to make examples of themselves:

I admit and press, that so long as all who are rich enough to get an article insist on getting it, the poorer will covet it, will count it a luxury, and will often ruin their finance by eagerness for it. But what then? Why, then, this is precisely the reason why the richer should set a different example [...] If there is not enough sound flesh meat for all, and it be not necessary for our welfare, why should we, who are richer, rush in to clutch at it? (March 1872, 37)

Newman, tactically, did not call upon his audience to become vegetarians; he called upon them to make themselves into examples of vegetarianism, or, as he said, to "set a different example" (37), not for their own benefit but for the benefit of the people. Newman articulated a theory of mimetic desire: the poor desired flesh because the rich consumed it. Citing the Friends' history of nonconformity and social justice (42), he asked his listeners to become vegetarians not for themselves, but for others, rhetorically appealing to the Victorian sense of personal responsibility for social problems. This was social reform through "pastorship" (Goodlad 18) rather than state intervention: it relied on voluntary individuals turning themselves into models to guide the millions toward salvation. Hence, to advance the advocacy of vegetarianism, Newman appealed to what nineteenth-century philanthropists and reformers already held to be true: that structural problems were best dealt with through personal sacrifice and individual effort (Harrison, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 227). Newman advocated a practice of the self, believing that small alterations in everyday rituals could bring about wider political and economic change.

## Newman's Name

In 1868, the news that Francis William Newman, professor emeritus of Latin at the University College London, had “become a convert to the Vegetarian principle” was, as the *Dietetic Reformer* told its readers, “no ordinary event” (April 1868, 33). For the VS, Newman’s conversion was extraordinary news, an event to be publicized; it was a conversion that, because of the identity of the convert, could be used to convert others (see figure 5.1). The VS’s use of the language of conversion to announce Newman’s adoption of the vegetarian diet may have been calculated to take advantage of the controversy surrounding his brother’s more famous conversion to Catholicism. The very public exchange between John Henry Newman and Charles Kingsley—which began with Kingsley’s attack on Newman in *Macmillan’s Magazine* and resulted in J.H. Newman’s response, his autobiographical *Apologia Pro Vita Sua*—was still a recent memory, having captured the public’s attention four years earlier in 1864. As Carolyn Barros writes, John Henry Newman’s conversion “shook the entire nation” (51). F.W. Newman’s vegetarian conversion may not have had the same impact, but it still gave the VS what it craved: a name, one recognized outside the small world of vegetarianism. As the *Manchester Guardian* wrote in its review of Newman’s *Essays on Diet* (1884), “[a]ny book, whatever its subject, which bears on its title-page the name of Francis Newman will be sure to be regarded with respectful interest” (12 Dec, 1883, 7). Even though he disparaged its “want of poetic taste and feeling,” Matthew Arnold admitted that Newman’s translation of Homer would “doubtless be read with that respectful attention which Mr. Newman’s name and literary labours must command” (*National Review*, Oct 1860, 292-3). The *Dietetic Reformer*, by publicizing the announcement of his conversion, aimed to capitalize on Newman’s celebrity and on the commodification of names in Victorian print culture. In 1873 the VS, as noted, appointed Newman as president: it wanted his name to represent them in the conversations and popular understanding of vegetarianism in the press.

The VS valued Newman precisely because he was not an insider entirely committed to vegetarianism. A sixty-two-year-old rationalist, he had no vested interest in promoting vegetarianism or in proving vegetarianism at all costs. He did not commit himself to all of its theories and thus could criticize some tenets while endorsing others; such independent judgement made him a firmer, more credible advocate before the public. The *Manchester Guardian* recommended his *Essays on Diet* for its “perfect frankness,” arguing that “Professor Newman is probably the most clear-headed and gifted writer that has identified himself with the Vegetarian movement” (12 Dec., 1883, 7). The *Dietetic Reformer* presented Newman’s conversion to vegetarianism in 1868 as a model of rational self-examination, one similar to the introspective self-examination he underwent in his spiritual autobiography, *Phases of Faith*. Thus, the VS traded on what Newman was known for: candid, yet critical, reasoning. And they also traded on the literary form with which the Newman name was associated: first-person confessional discourse.

When it announced the “event” of his conversion, the *Dietetic Reformer* also published Newman’s private correspondence with the VS, in which he detailed his daily trials, experiments, and difficulties with vegetarianism. As the editors commented, the simple fact that “a man of noble intellectual endowments” and “an author of no mean repute” (April 1868, 33) had converted to the diet spoke highly of vegetarianism; his conversion offered encouragement to the existing members of the VS, demonstrating that their cause was among the progressive movements of the day. The *Dietetic Reformer* introduced his extraordinary conversion by informing its readers,

that Professor Newman has not hastily or in any whimsical mood adopted this change of dietetic habit. His mature age and philosophic spirit would lead him to look closely and thoroughly into the facts and arguments, for and against the system, before he would venture to make so decided a change [...] Hence we feel assured that, having examined, tried, and pronounced in favour of Vegetarianism, Professor Newman will remain a firm and consistent abstainer from flesh food. (April 1868, 33)

Newman seemed to embody the ideal audience imagined by vegetarian propaganda: the rational agent who would set aside prejudice and appetite, study the “facts and arguments” on diet, and ultimately arrive at the only logical conclusion—vegetarianism. However, the objectivity of Newman’s testimony was not only attributable to his “philosophic spirit,” but was also an effect of the form in which it was presented in the pages of the *Dietetic Reformer*: that of the private self-disclosure. Newman’s correspondence with the *Dietetic Reformer* leading up to his conversion was, as the editors put it, “written in the free and confidential style of private friendship” (April 1868, 33). By emphasizing its private confidentiality and unrestrained freedom, the *Dietetic Reformer* positioned Newman’s discourse within the confessional mode that, as we saw earlier, developed into key strategy of vegetarian propaganda, but also became a hallmark of commercial journalism in the nineteenth century.

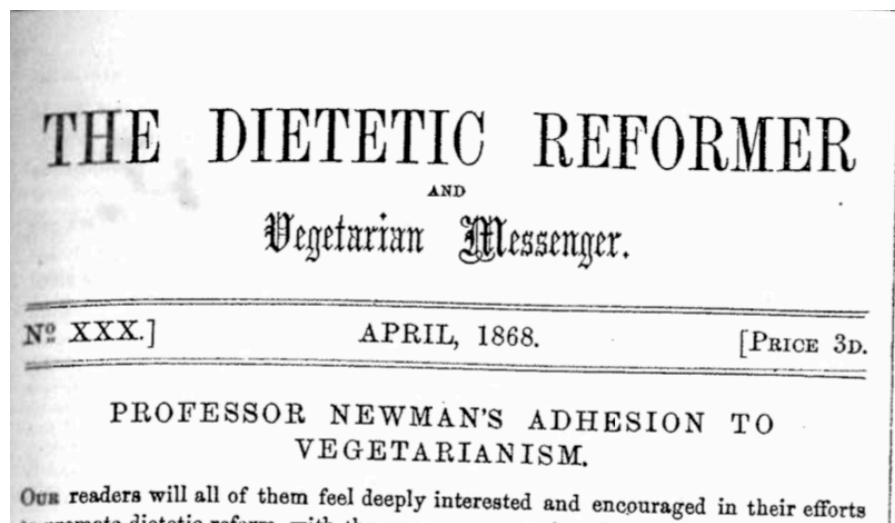


Figure 5.1: The front cover of the 1868 issue of the *Dietetic Reformer* that announced Newman’s conversion to vegetarianism. The headline foregrounds his name in its announcement. *Vegetarian Society Archives*.

Richard Salmon has argued that in the 1890s new journalistic practices, particularly the celebrity interview, brought about an historical shift in the cultural status of authorship, a shift in which “authors, like the texts they produce, [were] marketed as commodities, as products to be

circulated and consumed” (159). The celebrity interview displaced interpretation of the author’s text with a desire to know and consume the author’s life, a life that was now seen as “a more vital source of meaning” than the text (159). In 1850, Newman’s autobiographical *Phases of Faith* provoked controversy by publicly revealing his religious beliefs (or rather his religious doubts), but the ensuing debate centred on textual interpretation: through a “minute analysis of Mr. Newman’s writing” (*Westminster Review*, Oct. 1858, 417) his anonymous defender in the *Westminster Review* sought to expose the many nefarious ways in which Newman’s critics in the press had misrepresented his texts. However, in the late 1860s, the VS, while it honoured Newman’s literary productions, directed attention to his “valuable life” (*DR* April 1868, 33), particularly the changes of his dietetic habits. The VS’s established tactics for advocacy placed value on lives over texts; the life of the author was the pre-condition that produced and proved vegetarianism. The body was “the vital source of meaning” (Salmon 159) for vegetarians; before celebrity interviewing had made it common journalistic practice to delve into the lives of writers, the *Dietetic Reformer* disclosed for readers the intimate details of this famous author and scholar.

The April 1868 issue of the *Dietetic Reformer*, which announced in the title of its leader, “Professor Newman’s Adhesion to Vegetarianism” (April 1868, 33), also printed excerpts from a series of letters exchanged between Newman and the journal’s editors during the period of his conversion. These “interesting communications” were “not intended for public gaze or critical scrutiny” (April 1868, 33), but the *Dietetic Reformer* made public the private record of Newman’s “recent change of dietetic habits” (34) to embolden its readership at a time when the VS was haemorrhaging followers. The sequential juxtaposition of the January and April 1868 issues (the journal was a quarterly in the 60s) is illustrative here: on the last page of the January issue the journal told readers in small print to “Remove the following names from the list of members” (Jan. 1868, 32). The editors listed twenty-eight names, a number which far outweighed the solitary conversion

of Newman announced the following April issue. The journal gave no reason for the removal of the names from the list of members, but we can infer that they had simply ceased to follow vegetarianism. Relapses were common. Publicizing the conversion of Newman, “a man of noble intellectual endowments” (33), on the first page of the next issue suggests an attempt to compensate for and mask these losses. Newman’s private letters detail his daily experience with vegetarianism, the physiological changes it effected on body, his assessment of the principal arguments supporting the diet, and his reasons for experimenting on himself, reasons which he later developed and advocated in the press.

Newman’s conversion to vegetarianism took place in his home, observed only by his wife, Maria, but he carried on a constant correspondence with the VS, suggesting that even a private conversion is a social, dialogic process. Vegetarian self-reform involved slightly more than a relationship with the self: Newman consulted the VS’s cookbooks and advice, which it sent to him in the mail, while he also critiqued many of its principles. To his surprise, he discovered during his trial with vegetarianism that, rather than imperial his health, as he assumed it would, the practice improved it. He reported to the *Dietetic Reformer* the details of the “great change in my constitution” (37) as well as the changes to his daily rituals of self-care. In one letter published in the *Dietetic Reformer*, dated 16 January 1868, he began by documenting his progress:

You will be interested to know what progress I make in Vegetarianism. I am now seventeen days deep in it. I have suffered ‘bread indigestion’ twice, after barley pudding and something else: but I have had absolutely no cravings for meat, not even when it was at my side with warm odour. My relish for brown bread toast is unfailing. (I bear *brown* much better than *white* bread.) [...] I have no symptoms of failing flesh: in fact I left off dinner pills (to which I was becoming a slave), and find I get on well without them. Nothing so encourages me as this. (April 1868, 35).

This public display of his self-constitution routed the march of social progress through his own body. Counting his pulse and measuring the solidity of his flesh, Newman turned to the care of

himself, devoting his attention to his body. Readers learned, among other things, that: “my digestion has greatly improved” (April 1868, 36), an improvement that freed him from the “dinner pills” that his doctor had prescribed “expressly to enable me to eat meat” (36); that “[m]y teeth are so clean of a morning that I find nothing to brush” (36); that “[m]y hands are less aged in aspect, are fuller of flesh, and it is hard flesh too; I have not (at least not *yet!*) the slightest indication of fat anywhere, or of less hardness [...] No one can pretend that my muscles are less solid” (36-7); and finally that “[m]y pulse is fuller and higher [...] a boy’s pulse” (36). *My* teeth, *my* hands, *my* muscles, *my* pulse: Newman placed himself at the centre of his discourse. He quantified himself, tallying up his pulse rate and measuring his fat. Converting to vegetarianism required that Newman examine his own flesh, digestion, and biorhythms, while it also brought about a transformation of himself. Implicit in Newman’s dramatic and public examination of his teeth, pulse, muscles, and fat was the belief that constituting new practices of the self represented a significant social and political task. For Newman, its importance lay in the way that it imagined and enacted an alternative way of living. Working outside of the formal channels for reform, he emphasized ethical life practices.

Directly following Newman’s letters the editors of the *Dietetic Reformer* appended their responses to his critical observations, clarifying the substance of his letters for readers. For instance, in response to Newman’s suggestion that the permission of butter, but prohibition of suet, was “*illogical*” (35), the editors responded in an endnote, “[w]e think there is as clear a distinction between butter and suet as between milk and blood” (April 1868, 38). By including these supplementary responses to Newman’s letters, the journal created on its pages the impression of a dialogue between the voice of Newman, the novice, and that of the editors, the experienced vegetarians who spoke with the editorial “we.” This distinction between Newman’s individuality and the journal’s collective identity would remain in place even when he became

president of the VS: the journal operated under a policy of anonymity until the 1880s, but Newman's lectures and correspondence with the journal were signed to highlight his contributions and name. This practice of signature had the effect of distancing his voice from the corporate identity of the journal. In his approach to vegetarianism, Newman stressed his independence and disinterestedness. Hence, while Newman's name served the interests of the VS, lending credibility to its practice, his individuality disrupted its unity and while he himself openly criticized some of its earlier theories.

Newman's election as president signalled a shift in VS's audience and tactics. Previous presidents had all been longstanding abstainers. The first president and founder of the VS, James Simpson, was succeeded after his death by his father-in-law, Alderman William Harvey, in 1859.<sup>54</sup> Harvey had practiced vegetarianism before the foundation of the VS; his flesh abstinence began in early in the nineteenth century through his association with the Bible Christian Church. When the alderman passed away in 1871, he had abstained for upwards of sixty years. He was succeeded in the presidency by James Haughton, J.P. of Dublin, another old flesh abstainer who could draw upon his years of abstinence to prove the effects of vegetarianism. As he argued at the twentieth annual meeting of the VS in 1868, the year in which Newman was only just embarking on his abstinence, "I can truly state, that during the last 22 years of my life I have been a vegetarian, and that I have enjoyed better health than at any former period" (*DR*, Jan. 1868, 3). Another speaker at the meeting, Reverend James Clark, a future antagonist of Newman's, boasted that Haughton's "very appearance carried conviction as to the hygienic value of vegetarianism" (8). Vegetarians often complimented each other on their appearance as a way of forging a group identity.

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<sup>54</sup> According to his obituary, Harvey was a member of the United Kingdom Alliance, the anti-Corn Law League, and the Bible Christian Church, as well as friend of William Cobbett and a witness to Peterloo (*DR*, Jan. 1871, 31).



However, despite his “healthy physique” (2), Haughton was already in an advance age when he became president, and he served for only two years before he too died in 1873.

In appointing Newman as his successor, the VS broke with its tradition of having an experienced vegetarian who could testify to years of practice; it looked beyond its base of teetotal abstainers. Electing Newman as president placed the emphasis on expanding vegetarianism into new areas. Newman, although in his sixties, was known as a “young Vegetarian” (*DR*, Jan.1871, 3), and, after his conversion, the VS congratulated him for being simultaneously young and old: “For so young a covert, at an age far beyond forty [sixty two, in fact], he has made marvellous progress” (April 1868, 33). Having only started his study of diet in 1868, he could not testify to decades of abstinence as accumulated evidence. The VS chose him not for his vast experience with flesh abstinence, but for his established position in the intellectual print culture of the time. As William Axon reflected in 1885, Newman’s “voice was one listened to where those who preceded him could not have obtained so much as a hearing” (*DR*, May 1885, 126). Newman’s ability to address different audiences quickly made him one of the most recurrent features of *Dietetic Reformer*: it published Newman’s lectures, but also served as a venue to advertise his publications. Its monthly summaries of the VS’s proceedings frequently highlighted Newman’s lecturing activity, noting the reception from the audience. It attributed many new converts and a growing interest in vegetarianism to Newman’s contributions to popular organs of the press, such as his article on vegetarianism in *Fraser’s Magazine* in 1875. As noted, in 1885 he wrote a response to the *Times*’ criticisms of vegetarianism, in which he used the editors’ “mention of my name” as justification to “to offer some elucidation” on the subject, counter-balancing the *Times*’ mockery (20 Jan., 1885, 6). Newman, in other words, could defend the claims of vegetarianism in new arenas. His lectures attracted attention; as a regular contributor to general periodicals, he could reach a broader audience of readers. And, because he brought a newcomer’s perspective, he was

sympathetic to the practical difficulties faced by beginners. As an observer of vegetarianism, he could interpret its closed world for others.

Indeed, in his lectures he often spoke as an interpreter, mediating vegetarianism for the general public. As Newman noted in his lecture before the Friends' Society, when "the name and practice of Vegetarianism" was brought up, most English men and women regarded it as "fanciful and ridiculous" (*DR*, March 1872, 33), a position he too once held. Analysing the subject of vegetarianism required estrangement. As he told an audience in Gloucester, "I cannot treat the subject of food unless you will, at least for a little while, consent to look at things with fresh eyes, and refuse to be blinded by fashion and routine" ("VEM," 1). Newman reframed the unpopular subject of vegetarianism by first of all by referring to "the subject of food" (1). Newman's tactic, when addressing the public, was not to speak of, or even mention, vegetarianism directly, but to draw attention to the implications of food choices.

For instance, Newman began his lecture in Gloucester by emphasizing the importance of the everyday question of what to eat: "What shall we eat?" really is a question of first importance: but it is seldom so treated. In general, the rich eat what they like, and the poor what they can get; neither the one nor the other studies what is best" ("VEM" 1). By implication, or by elimination, Newman positioned the middle classes, those who could afford neither to eat whatever they liked or to be seen eating whatever they could get, as the potential audience for studying "what is best." The social and economic position of the middle classes depended on maintaining a respectable living within limited means, and Newman appealed to their economic concerns, presenting his diet as the rational and humane answer to the quotidian question of what to eat.

The class politics of vegetarianism, its idealization of moderation or of being in the middle, was rhetorically grounded in its scientific exposition of anatomy, particularly its taxonomic classification of the human animal: "man," vegetarians argued, stood between the two

extremes of herbivores and carnivores, prey and predators. To establish humanity's essentially vegetarian nature, Newman summarized the common argument that "[m]an is neither herbivorous, as the sheep and horse, nor carnivorous as the lion, but is frugivorous, as the monkey" ("VEM" 4). The analogy in this dietary classification is implicit but clear: the ideal representative of "man" is a member neither of the working classes, the oxen of society, nor of the carnivorous upper classes, the predators who feast upon the labour of others, but of the industrious middle classes, the self-sufficient and intermediary primates who neither eat others nor are eaten by them. "Man" is an intermediate being, argued vegetarians, adapted for eating fruits, nuts, grains, and pulses. They used anatomical classification to support their class politics, disciplining lower class ignorance and critiquing upper class indulgence.<sup>55</sup>

It is important to note here, however, that although Newman voiced vegetarian arguments on anatomy and other subjects, he did not always identify with them. In the literal sense of the word, he undertook the work of *advocacy*, meaning *to speak on behalf of* (Haraway, "Species Matters," 22). As he noted in his Gloucester lecture,

I have called my lecture vegetarianism; but as the word does not explain wholly explain itself, you may justly ask me for its meaning. Many suppose it to mean a diet consisting of table vegetables. It is true that these are an essential part of Vegetarian diet, yet they are by no means the most important. Vegetarian food consists mainly of four heads—farinacea, pulse, fruit, and table vegetables. ("VEM" 2)

Newman did not stand before his audience and say, "behold the vegetarian," believing that the truths of vegetarianism were made self-evident by his presence on the podium; rather, because

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<sup>55</sup> Anna Kingsford, in her first "Letter on Pure Diet" for the *Food Reform Magazine*, articulated vegetarianism's identification with middleclass interests more explicitly and less tactfully than Newman:

The system we advocate is pre-eminently a scientific system, and for that very reason, it requires special exposition to make known its bases and its value. The poor are too ignorant to comprehend its *rationale*, the rich are too luxurious or too indolent to care to trouble themselves about the subject; it is chiefly among the middle class that our teaching is likely to find minds capable of understanding and hearts of being touched (64).

The vegetarian movement appealed to the middleclass ideologies of science, reason, domesticity, and the heart.

vegetarianism would not speak for itself, he undertook an explication of “its meaning (2). Newman read and studied the literature of vegetarianism—such as John Smith’s *Fruits and Farinacea*, which Newman edited and abridged for a new edition in 1880—and he could therefore elucidate its principles for a new audience, simplifying its arguments for “busy and unscientific readers” (as he wrote in his “Preface” to *Fruits and Farinacea*). Newman spoke for vegetarianism, but did not necessarily identify as a vegetarian. He preferred to define his practice as the V.E.M. diet (or vegetables, eggs, milk) because, as he pointed out, few vegetarians restricted themselves to diet of vegetables (“VEM” 4). He further distanced himself from vegetarians by making use of the third person when speaking of them, as though he were reporting on their habits but was not himself of their kind: “Vegetarians seldom endure baker’s bread; they always become fastidious about bread, as teetotallers about water” (“VEM” 1), he told his audience. Or he would refer to and explicate “another argument of Vegetarians” (4), a turn of phrase which suggests that it was not *his* argument. He was the medium of vegetarianism, the ethnographer who had lived among the vegetarians and studied their ways. Some of their claims—such as the syllogism, “carnivorous animals never sweat, but man certainly does sweat; therefore he is not carnivorous” (“VEM” 4)—Newman did not endorse. His use of the third person in discussing vegetarians and vegetarian arguments served to distance him from his subject and lend his voice an air of detached objectivity. In this way his lectures performed what he called upon his audience to do: to look at vegetarianism with fresh, independent eyes.

Newman delivered his definition and interpretation of vegetarianism orally, in the flesh so to speak, but, because his tactics of scholarly explication did not rely on the embodied presence of the speaking vegetarian, they lent themselves to dissemination through print media. Many of his lectures, letters, and essays first appeared in the *Dietetic Reformer*, were then circulated as pamphlets, and were later published in his collected volume, *Essays on Diet*. Laurel Brake relates

how “this cycle of serial and book publication is clearly a principal model of authorship in nineteenth century Britain” (16). The VS adopted it to enhance the visibility of Newman’s name and authorial identity. As noted, before Newman’s time much of the *Dietetic Reformer’s* content was anonymous—other than, of course, specific speeches and resolutions delivered at meetings, which, like parliamentary debates, were attributed to the speaker in the third person. After Newman’s arrival, however, he and other popular authors, such as Anna Kingsford, began to publish papers in the journal that followed the fashion of signed journalism in the monthly reviews. A brief excerpt from the *Dietetic Reformer’s* summary of events in 1872 indicates the efforts of the *Dietetic Reformer* to maximise Newman’s name and distribution among different audiences and media:

On the following (Friday) evening, Professor Newman gave, by request, a lecture at the Friends’ Institute, Manchester. There was an excellent attendance of Friends, and the proceedings were not of course open to the general public. At the close, a lively and intelligent discussion took place, and encouraging testimony to our cause was borne by several Friends. The valuable lecture delivered by Professor Newman, which earned the unanimous favour of his listeners, we are compelled to reserve for another issue. Some extra copies will be printed separately for general circulation, for which orders should be sent us early (Jan. 1872, 2-3).

Initially a private discussion at the Friend’s Institute, this “valuable lecture” reached a larger audience by being printed as a pamphlet “separately for general circulation.” Furthermore, advertised in one issue of the *Dietetic Reformer*, the lecture’s contents were reserved for the following issue, using the serial form to encourage readers to return. And, when re-packaged as chapter four in *Essays on Diet*, it was, as noted, reviewed in the *Manchester Guardian* and other print media. The VS thus disseminated Newman’s advocacy through what Laurel Brake describes as the cacophony of serial publication in the Victorian period. Brake outlines the economic motives for serialization: a multiplicity of different publishing formats enhanced profits by offering cheap and varied access to print commodities (30-31). Here we see that the economics of multi-staged

publication enabled the VS to circulate Newman's name to different niche markets: Friends, established vegetarians, and the "general" reading public. As I argue in the following sections of this chapter, Newman adopted the economic model of serialization for the practice of vegetarianism itself.

The *Dietetic Reformer* described the conversion of Newman to its readers as his "adhesion" to vegetarianism; however, reading the journal over the several months and years that followed his conversion makes it clear that the VS actively worked to forge an adhesive bond between the signature of Newman and the practice of vegetarianism, a bond from which Newman found it difficult to extricate himself. Curiously, when it appointed Newman as president in 1873, the VS did not ask his permission. He first learned about his appointment by seeing it in print. In a letter to the journal, he protested the decision and the appropriation of his name:

I regard it as a hasty measure of our Executive to have printed my name as President, which quite took me by surprise. If my consent had first been asked, I think I should have declined, except under the stipulation that the basis of the Society be enlarged, and a true name be given it. To have a *unique* position in any society is not a pleasant responsibility, unless one is satisfied with its foundation, and I must say I am not satisfied with ours (Sept 1873, 317.)

Voicing his dissatisfaction with the very society he now presided over, Newman indicated that, had he been consulted about the position of president, he would have made his acceptance contingent upon a reformation of the VS's rules, constitution, and forms of association. When addressing an external audience from the platform or in the press, Newman advocated vegetarianism as one solution to the nation's political, economic, and dietary problems, but, when addressing an internal audience at Annual Meetings, Newman was openly critical of the VS, its "misleading and inaccurate" (317) name, and many of its foundational texts and precepts. The VS's celebrated and newly anointed leader introduced self-criticism and dissent to the vegetarian movement. Newman was a nonconformist president, a pastor at odds with his flock, and in the

years following his election he carried on a protracted debate with the stricter vegetarians who resisted Newman's attempts to liberalize the VS's stance on firm abstinence and admit different levels of dietetic reformers.

In the later period of Newman's presidency the VS continued to exploit his name against his wishes. In 1883, because of his advancing age, Newman was unable to preside at the VS's May Conference, and in his stead he sent a letter to the conference in which he voiced his desire to withdraw from the office of President, despite the resolutions calling for him to continue:

At the business meeting of our Society you have a right to expect to meet your President. I feel myself in an unseemly position by holding the office. My desire to be free from it continues the same, notwithstanding the two resolutions of satisfaction with me and confidence in me for which I cordially thank those who were present to join in the vote. It is impossible not to be sensible of the honour hereby paid me; and if for your own reason you (collectively) persist in re-electing a permanent absentee, it may be un-amiable in me to resist. Perhaps this is as much as I need say on this personal question. (Nov. 1883, 316)

The fact that the VS sought to retain Newman as President, even though he lacked the physical strength to fulfil his duties, demonstrates his importance to the society and, moreover, that his importance lay in his name, and not in his body. Vegetarian propaganda repeatedly stressed the importance of the embodied presence of the healthy vegetarian, but here Newman's presence appears to have become unnecessary and was substituted by a letter. Newman remained the titular head of the VS until the end of 1884 when Professor Mayor relieved him.

Even though he was a figurehead, Newman was no instrument of the VS: he spoke for and represented vegetarianism before new audiences, tailoring it to middleclass economic interests, but he also had his own ideas on how it was to be understood and disseminated. In his personal practice, Newman was concerned less with upholding consistent abstinence, and more with developing a practical program of national dietary reform. The very progressive characteristics that made him a natural ally of the VS—his opposition to convention, orthodoxy,

and established creeds—also brought him into conflict with ascetic vegetarians such as George Dornbusch and the Reverend W. Molesworth. Where Newman saw vegetarianism through the lens of epistemology (as practical knowledge, as something one learns how to do), strict vegetarians such as Molesworth saw it through ontology (as an identity and category of being, as something one *is*). In what remains, I detail Newman’s efforts to win converts and reform the VS.

### **Vegetarian Killjoys**

*It had been said that Christ came not to send peace on earth, but a sword, and it is undoubtedly true that, in adopting the principle of Vegetarianism, it might be possible to set the son against the father, the husband against the wife, the wife against the husband, or the sister against the brother.*

—The Reverend James Clark, speaking at The Annual Soiree in 1873

At the 1871 Annual Meeting, Newman compared the prospects of the vegetarian movement to those of the temperance movement. He pointed out that “our difficulties”—that is, the difficulties facing the VS—were “graver than the alcoholic controversy” (Jan 1872, 12).

Temperance, he suggested, required only negative abstinence, that is, *not* drinking alcohol.

Vegetarians, on the other hand, had to be productive, not only abstaining from meat, but also inventing a new alimentary system to take its place. As Newman argued, one could reasonably sit at the dinner table and decline the wine, but to refuse the main course would “derange the whole meal” (12). Newman envisioned his serialized grades as the solution to the problems facing vegetarians at the table, problems that had to do with conviviality and companionship, the breaking of bread. Like Sarah Ahmed, Newman recognized that manners and etiquette at the table stifled broader patterns of social change. In her essay on “Feminist Killjoys,” Ahmed relates that her experience as a feminist began at dinner:

We begin with a table. Around this table, the family gathers, having polite conversations, where only certain things can be brought up. Someone says something you consider problematic. [...] You respond, carefully, perhaps. You say why you think what they have said is problematic. (Ahmed, “Feminist Killjoys,” n.p.)



What if someone serves you something that you consider problematic? Or eats something, or someone, in front of you, and you consider it “problematic”? Newman acknowledged these questions faced young people trying to join their society. During the 1871 annual meeting, at which Newman introduced his proposal for graduated membership, he claimed that adults and the elderly were difficult to convert because a lifetime of eating had “fixed” their tastes (Jan 1872, 12). However, younger members of the family, who were more easily convinced or at least willing to experiment, found themselves in a constrained position: they did not arrange “the family meal” (12), as Newman pointed out, and seldom could they have a “special dish” prepared for them (12). If they refused the main course or the soup, they were left with “a few vegetables and pudding” (12), an insufficient dinner that, Newman feared, would imperil their health and reflect poorly on vegetarianism. He also feared that, like Ahmed’s young feminist killjoy, young vegetarians would find themselves in opposition to the older generation:

Young persons who so choose their diet are not only treated as fanciful, but give anxiety and offense; in fact, though an aversion to butcher’s meat is very common with young ladies especially, it is seldom *possible* for them to act on our principle while the elder part of society have such habits, and medical men hold their present doctrines. (Jan. 1872, 12)

Reiterating the common belief that vegetarianism appealed to women, Newman presented the conflict at the table as one between genders and generations: “medical men” told “young ladies” to eat meat. More importantly, as Newman suggested, young people who wanted to become vegetarians risked offending “the elder part of society” (12). They were killjoys at the table,<sup>56</sup> ruining the family meal and disrupting the feeling of commensalism. Not only did vegetarians refuse to eat the meat that was served to them; their moral stance made others feel uncomfortable, even defensive. The presence of a vegetarian heightened awareness of what was being eaten: an animal. That is to say, a vegetarian at the table made it less easy to forget the

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<sup>56</sup> For an application of Ahmed’s “feminist killjoy” to contemporary veganism, see Richard Twine.

meal's origins in the slaughterhouse. Henry Salt, a contemporary of Newman's, specifically instructed vegetarians to act the killjoy with their companions. When seated amid an arrangement of plates, silverware, candles, tablecloth, and flowers, one was meant to ask with Socratic irony, "But what of the meat—the thing cooked? What is it? What *was* it? And how did it come to be on your plate?" (53). Salt wanted vegetarians to transform the table from a space of passive consumption into one of political engagement. The question, *how did it come to be on your plate?*, expanded the temporal and geographical frame of the dinner table, producing a "metonymic reading" (Freedgood 11) of "the thing cooked" (53) that looked beyond its naturalized symbolic meaning on the table to its history in the lives and labour of (human and nonhuman) others.

Newman took a less confrontational approach than Salt. His experimentation with vegetarian food aimed not to exacerbate the ethical differences separating vegetarians from flesh-eating society, but instead to ameliorate the difficulties vegetarians faced at the table, *and* to make it possible for vegetarians to co-exist with their omnivorous companions. He worked to make life easier for vegetarians, and to make meat eaters feel welcome within the VS. Newman allowed for no exclusions based on dogmatic rules, not even the exclusion of non-vegetarians.

Addressing the VS in 1871, Newman noted that there were many who sympathised with their cause, but, because of contexts and circumstances, they could not strictly adhere to their rules. Young people, as noted, could not always determine what was set before them. A similar difficulty confronted travelers, or anyone who was "thrown on the hospitality of others" (Jan 1872, 12). Newman advocated admitting those who were interested in, but not capable of practicing, vegetarianism, because he believed they could gradually led toward the full practice: "I regard all these classes as our coadjutors at present, and capable of becoming converts. Yet, as our society is constituted at present, those friendly persons are shut out" (12). As Newman pointed out, those who were experimenting with vegetarianism found themselves alienated not only from

their friends and family, but also from the VS. They were doubly “shut out,” living in limbo, estranged from the family table but not yet admitted to the VS. His criticism of excluding and shutting out sympathizers resonates with the alienation that Newman experienced from the Church of England. He himself drew this parallel in one of his arguments with vegetarians over the exclusivity of their society: “Is not this reasoning [in favour of strict abstinence] too much like that of a miserably little church which excommunicates those who do not come up to the standard of its creed? We remain in the world in spite of our exclusiveness” (317). Newman here articulated his practical realism: the vegetarians lived in the world and would have to engage with it. To again borrow Derrida’s “metonymical” (115) understanding of eating (as the material and symbolic assimilation of the other), Newman pressed the vegetarians to eat with and of others, advocating the inclusion (and eventual assimilation) of outsiders in their society. At stake was the separatist exclusivity of the VS, its attempts to constitute a parallel and separatist world divided from the fallen world of flesh-eating.

Unlike Salt, Newman did not necessarily believe in strict abstinence, and he questioned the longstanding association between preaching and practicing vegetarianism, or believing in and acting on its creed:

At present, one who thoroughly holds the creed of the Society, cannot belong to it unless he acts on the creed; yet to act is in manifold instances beyond the power of the individual. His table is provided for him by others. The number who are in this state of helplessness maybe ten times as many as are our actual members. To obtain their adhesion and co-operation, is surely worth some small sacrifice, some modification of our rules. (*DR*, Jan. 1872, 12)

Newman admitted what many vegetarians did not: that individuals were not always in a position to select a strict vegetarian diet, particularly the poor. Vegetarian advocacy in the nineteenth century, like other social reform movements, tended to emphasize the power of self-reform. Newman, however, pointed out the flaws of this reasoning, arguing that the individual often occupied a position of relative powerlessness or “helplessness” (12). He emphasized the sociality

of food, the fact that one never ate alone. The climate, the wider economy of food production, and cultural habits all made it difficult for individuals to undertake vegetarian self-reform independently. Again, one's diet was not only a matter of personal choice; it hinged on social, economic and geographic circumstances as well. A strict vegetarian diet would mean deprivation for those unable to find adequate substitutes.

Furthermore, not only was the individual often powerless to provide a vegetarian diet for him or herself, but focusing on the individual was also an ineffective strategy for social change. Vegetarians, Newman argued repeatedly, should work not to make individual converts, but instead to lessen the demand for meat while also supporting the cultivation of fruits and grains. Looking at the long term, he told the editors of the *Dietetic Reformer* that, for the next five hundred years, even the most ardent vegetarians could expect nothing more than “*a reaction of the tide* against flesh-meat diet” and a “lessening of the pressure after it” (April 1868, 35). Where the VS traditionally advocated strict abstinence and individual self-reform, Newman encouraged smaller, yet broader, shifts, a change not just in the individual but in the cultural and economic systems that fed the individual.

Cookery, as Luce Giard argues, takes place at the intersection of natural, technical, social, and economic histories (171-3), all of which exceed the agency of the individual and reveal the limitations of individual self-reform. The difficulty of finding a vegetarian fat, particularly for working poor, offers an example. As Newman argued in his letters to the VS and in his public lectures, “in cookery we need some grease” (“VEM” 3), or “*Some* grease is essential” (*DR*, April 1868, 35). A scholar of languages and religion, Newman reduced vegetarianism from its moral idealism to the very material problem of cooking fat. Most conventional vegetarians admitted the use of milk, cheese, and eggs; standard vegetarian cookery relied on butter in place of suet and lard, making it expensive and out of the reach of the poor. As Newman pointed out, butter was

“an expensive article difficult to get” (35), especially in urban cities. Olive oil was similarly “costly” and not to the tastes of “Englishmen” (35). In 1871, Newman argued that “[p]ure olive oil is hard to get, hard to keep long, and certainly dear. We never can expel dripping, suet, and lard from the use of the poor, by substituting olive oil, any more than butter” (*DR*, Jan 1872, 15). The working classes, as Newman pointed out, relied on lard or drippings to flavour their bread and potatoes; many also ate sprats and herring for flavouring as much as substance. As long as they did so, they breached the laws of the VS and were excluded. As Newman later wrote in a letter to the *Dietetic Reformer*, “the want of such cheap unguent keeps many from becoming full members of our society” (Jan 1876, 12). Newman himself seemed quite fond of suet, claiming that “[s]uet pudding suits me admirably well” (April 1868, 35). Until they could find an adequate substitute for it, Newman argued that “it [was] important not to forbid cheap grease” (35)—otherwise they risked alienating many potential sympathizers and allies in dietary reform.

The VS boasted of the diet’s thrift (grains and pulses cost less than meat), but Newman, in calling attention to unguents, deliberately brought to the forefront the economic and culinary disadvantages of vegetarianism. Rather than celebrate its supposed benefits, he wanted to discuss openly food reform’s drawbacks: “Let us not deceive ourselves. We must look our difficulties in the face” (Jan 1872, 12). Cheap grease was, apparently, one quite pressing problem for vegetarians. One reader termed it the “oil difficulty”:

Unquestionably one great obstacle to the progress of our movement arises from what is known as ‘the oil difficulty’ [...] Now, to refuse flesh while we depend upon animal fat for cooking is inconsistent at least. But the cost of good butter practically prohibits its use for this purpose, while oil—the very thought of it is to many persons intolerable! The difficulty is a real one. (May 1885, 141-42)

The great vegetarian movement threatened to come undone on the all too real question of grease. Newman himself led the search for cheap fat. Presidents before him rarely, if ever, contributed to the letter section of the journal or to its recipe columns, leaving this worker to readers, but

Newman maintained a regular correspondence with the *Dietetic Reformer*. In the monthly section, “Queries, Replies, and Suggestions” (see figure 5.3 below), in which vegetarians could pose and answer questions to each other, Newman submitted a brief note on “Peanut Oil” to the January 1876 issue: “I read with great interest about American peanut oil. What is a peanut?” (13; see figure 5.5 below). Even though he was president, Newman did not assume a position of authority on vegetarianism; instead, he asked the rank and file membership for information on the use and identity of a peanut, turning the pages of the journal into a social space in which vegetarians could assist and guide each other in the development of their practice. Newman, for instance, contributed recipes to the back pages of the journal that contained as many questions as instructions (figure 5.2): in his recipe for “Russian Compost” he wrote that “stewed carrot may be added if you can get it” but also suggested alternatives in parenthesis: “(parsnip? Jerusalem artichoke? Squash?)” (April 1875, 202). Inserting parenthetical questions into his recipes—“(fennel? tarragon?)”—Newman turned vegetarian cookery into a dialogue rather than moral prescription. The vegetarian did not dine alone, but through conversation with others.

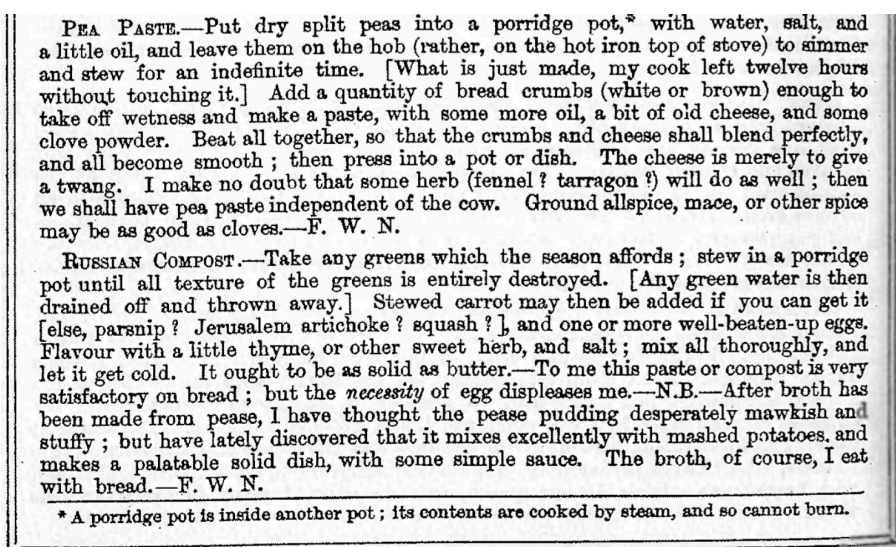


Figure 5.2: Newman’s Recipes for “Pea Paste” and “Russian Compost.” *Dietetic Reformer*, April 1875, 202. *VS Archives*.

## Queries, Replies, and Suggestions.

"J.B." asks where in London he can obtain the peanut oil retail, and in sound condition?

FRUIT.—Your people can have as much canned fruit from America as you want. Enormous quantities are wasted here every year. Send over some one to put the idea in shape for you.—M. L. H.

NEWTON.—"E.C.C." inquires the authority for the statement that Newton had worked out and written his "Principia" on Vegetarian Diet. Can any reader well acquainted with our literature supply it?

A student desires to know where he can find the original of the testimony by Dr. Carpenter, quoted in our "Medical and Scientific Testimony," and also by Dr. Lees in his "Prize Essay." He has looked in vain through twenty years volumes of the *Medico-Chirurgical Review*.

M. N. suggests that the keepers of temperance hotels should be encouraged to provide Vegetarian dinners once or twice weekly, as a welcome novelty to their customers and a profitable arrangement for themselves. He also mentions as an excellent substitute for coffee, the occasional use of lime-juice, and commends that supplied by Messrs. Crosse and Blackwall.

HOWARD ON SALT.—The water-physician, Dr. Th. Hahn, near St. Gallen (Switzerland), begs me to ask if you know a book, by a Mr. Howard, on abstinence from salt. It was published in England at the end of 1853, and upon which was based a Howard system, which was recommended in 1854 by a Mr. Taylor to the general public. Mr. Hahn is editor of a periodical and wishes to treat the question in an early number.—With best greetings, your devoted friend, E. WEILSHAUSER, Oppeln, Silesia.

COFFEE, &c., v. ALCOHOL.—I have lately read a very interesting book, published by Hachette, on this question, "*Le café, le chocolat, et le thé*," par le Dr. Riant, price fifty cents. It would be well also to make known the use of *gloria* as a drink. "*Gloria*" is cold coffee mixed with cold water. Nothing is to be compared with it for quenching thirst. *Choca* is a mixture of coffee and chocolate. It is excellent for those who find coffee too exciting or chocolate too heavy. If your scheme of Vegetarian Restaurants be realised, tea, chocolate, coffee, *gloria*, and *choca* should be adopted. Vegetarianism must prosecute the war against alcohol drinking. These drinks should be adopted too by the "British Workmen" temperance houses.—JOSEPH BIGORRY, Grand Hotel d'Allemagne, 44, Rue Saint-Sabin, Paris.

Figure 5.3: "Queries, Replies, and Suggestions," Feb. 1876, *Dietetic Reformer*, 27. This monthly feature of questions and replies reveals how the participatory genre of the periodical forged a national discourse. Personal experimentation in the home (with, say, peanut oil or Cadbury's Cocoa) could, through this dialogue, become part of a collective experience. *VS Archives*.

Newman's search for cheap grease also led him to experiment with cocoa butter from "Messrs. Cadbury," as he reported in his correspondence to friends and the *Dietetic Messenger* (March 1876, 38). As he wrote in one letter, "I am ever in experiment on something. At the present it is on cacao butter and vegetable oils" (Sieveking 315). This experimentation with novel

and unknown foods transformed vegetarianism from an ascetic practice of abstinence to an active exploration of cultural and epistemological limits; it pushed the boundaries of edibility. As I want to say, the participatory framework of the periodical turned his private experimentation with cocoa butter and other oil substitutes into a social, collective experience. Newman's note on the peanut in the January 1876 issue of the *Dietetic Reformer* found itself immersed among other queries that pertained to vegetarians: readers asked questions on Portuguese fruit, Spanish beans, and Egyptian wheat. Newman also contributed some information on rice, quoting an authority who lamented that only white rice, not the brown rice eaten in India, was sold in English grocery stores—a comment that reveals how the vegetarians of England were cosmopolitan consumers; their rejection of English beef required that they look to Indian and other non-English cuisines for inspiration.<sup>57</sup> The importance of this monthly section of “Queries, Replies, and Suggestions” (figure 5.3) lay in the fact that it turned the *Dietetic Messenger* into a medium for readers to communicate with each other; rather than passively consume the advice and instructions of the editors, readers became contributors to the journal and to the development of vegetarianism. A question posed in one issue—such as Newman's “what is a peanut?”—would be answered in a following issue. For instance, in May 1876, “T.H.” queried, “Can any readers tell me where to purchase apricots, peaches, figs, apples, plums, and peaches, to give me a proper succession for every month in the year?” (76), while below him “J.H.” wondered “if any of your amateur Vegetariennes (if that be an allowable word) can suggest any better materials for a savoury vegetable sauce”? (May 1876, 76). “F.L.” wanted advice on “the use of nuts as food” (76), and J. Richardson asked, “Is there any place where I can obtain flour which has had the bran ground up into a *fine powder* and mixed with the white flour?” (76). A question from “A.D” on wheat mills received a response from “G.B.” of “Grassmere Lodge, Stoke Bishop, Bristol” (Jan 1876, 13).

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<sup>57</sup> On the cosmopolitanism of late-Victorian vegetarians, see Leela Ghandi.



This dialogue among readers employed the seriality of the journal to create an ongoing conversation across issues; by inviting the engagement and contributions of readers, it also revealed the participatory aspect of vegetarianism as well as the emergence of middleclass vegetarian consumers who were eager to find and buy products to suit their lifestyle.

Again, the point here is that an individual could not alone advance vegetarianism: vegetarians conducted and shepherded each other, constructing a vegetarian dietary. In correspondence pages, one reader might recommend haricot beans (“remarkably nutritive and sustaining”), while below him another would develop a scheme for importing grapes from Spain (Feb. 1876, 24). In 1883, Newman posed a question on the number of courses at a meal: “How many *courses* ought we to have at dinner?” (Jan 1883, 12). Vegetarians thus discussed not only *what* to eat, but *how*. Against the fashion of the time, Newman recommend having fewer courses per meal, but more meals per day, believing that vegetarians, like herbivores, should eat frequently but lightly. This plan of nibbling, he believed, would prevent excessive eating at dinner, and thus Newman envisioned using re-structured daily habits (three to four meals per day but of only one course) to reshape behaviour.

In response to his query, “What is a Peanut?” (Jan 1876, 13), which appeared in the January 1876 issue, Newman received many “kind replies” (Feb 1876, 25). In the following February issue, he thanked readers for their friendly responses: “One friend sent me a little bag of them, purchased at Plymouth; another has sent me an ample discussion in print” (25). Newman summarized what he learned for readers, relating the peanut’s different names, scientific classification, areas of cultivation, and, importantly, uses: “The oil extracted from it is described as having a sweetness and delicacy that cannot be surpassed; also as not readily becoming rancid. The refuse of the nuts is excellent. Finally, the nuts themselves may be half roasted and eaten with salt” (25). Here, then, was one step to overcoming the oil difficulty. As noted, the problems that

faced beginning vegetarians placed many of them in a position of helplessness that could not be overcome by personal effort. Young vegetarians, lodgers, and travellers were unable to determine what food was set before them. The working classes were unable to afford butter or find olive oil. Cooking with oil was relatively uncharted territory in nineteenth-century England, as readers' comments on the taste of oil attest. The interrelated forces named by Giard—geographical, technical, historical, economic, and social—that shape and produce a meal placed constraints on the efficacy of self-reform. The dialogic texture of the journal reveals how these problems were worked out collectively.<sup>58</sup> Newman used the *Dietetic Reformer* not only as a propaganda tool to disseminate and advocate vegetarianism, but also as a social space to create and transform it. In doing so, he made the periodical itself into a vegetarian church, or pastoral mechanism to gather the flock together. Isolated vegetarians, those who did not have vegetarian friends, families, or local associations, could develop companionship (literally, the act of eating with others) through their correspondence with other vegetarians.

The problem of finding a vegetarian oil was not only practical, but also doctrinal and ideological; nothing perhaps offered a better reminder that vegetarians were still of this world than the body's appetite for fat. The need for a suitable fat evoked the fleshy corporeality of the body, tarnishing vegetarianism's ethereal purity. Some strict vegetarians, such as Newman's frequent interlocutors, George Dornbusch and the Rev. W. Nassau Molesworth, renounced not only flesh, but all animal products as well as all forms of fat and even salt, tea, and coffee. Dornbusch reportedly only ate one meal a day, a claim he later refuted. Newman remained unconvinced that "oils and salt [were] undesirable as food, or that one meal a day is a good

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<sup>58</sup> In one striking example of collective action, Chas Flint suggested in the May 1876 issue that vegetarians set up a cooperative "to supply ourselves with some of the leading the necessaries of life of better quality and purity and at less cost" (May 1876, 74). This plan was realized in the 1880s when the VS opened its "Vegetarian Depot" to sell foods and others supplies

universal rule” (Jan 1872, 11). Such a restricted diet, Newman argued, did not offer an accessible program for national reform. To incorporate a wider segment of society into the food reform movement, the vegetarians would have to learn how to satisfy, rather than deny, the body.

Newman’s disagreements with stricter vegetarians meant that not all conversations in the *Dietetic Reformer* were friendly. Newman himself could be confrontational. As an example, I appeal to a spatial juxtaposition in the pages of the February 1876 issue of the *Dietetic Reformer*, the issue in which Newman panegyricized on the peanut. Below his letter we find another written by a woman (signed H.B.K.) thanking Newman for his article in *Fraser’s Magazine* on vegetarianism, which she credited with converting first her and, through her, her family, to vegetarianism (Feb 1876, 25). The letter hints at the importance of Newman in popularizing vegetarianism to outsiders. However, on the previous page we find another letter contributed by Newman (he corresponded voluminously) titled, “Warning Words,” in which he issued “a few words to eccentric Vegetarians” (Feb 1876, 23), specifically addressing Molesworth and others who followed the strict regime of Sylvester Graham, the American vegetarian campaigner. Newman disputed the Grahamite prohibition of all animal products as well as salt, spices, condiments, tea, and coffee, essentially anything deemed too “stimulating,” pleasurable, or unnatural. Newman did not believe that “eccentric vegetarians” had enough evidence to prove that eggs and milk products were “unwholesome,” while salt, tea, condiments and coffee, being essentially vegetarian, did not belong on a vegetarian platform:

Our first business is to put before the eyes of the community as large as possible a supply of fruits and farinacea, healthful, palatable, and accessible. Sugar and spice for fruits and puddings, savoury herbs and other condiments for vegetable roots, mushes, porridges, and soups, are of first rate importance; so are salt and oleaginous material” (Feb 1876, 23).

Vegetarians, Newman argued, had enough work to do in encouraging others to give up meat, and he felt it was unwise to further restrict their diet with “gratuitous prohibitions” (23). They wanted to formulate an “accessible” (23) diet that would appeal to as large a community as possible.

The following issue was inundated with responses to Newman, not all of them friendly. An address to “our respected President” (March 1876, 70) sounded almost sarcastic. The conflict drew to the forefront internal conflict and dissent against a sitting president of the VS. Some correspondents defended their abstinence from salt and tea: A. Boyle wrote, “[m]y own experience, when a pure Vegetarian, is that any free use of salt has almost immediate prejudicial consequences” (71). Others appropriated Newman-like arguments on the ethical duty to criticize authority and entrenched habits: “it appears to me that Professor Newman’s ‘Warning Words,’ looking at them in the light of dietetic reform, are open to criticism” (73), wrote a correspondent named Cheadle. He went on to claim that “no previous convictions should present us from examining every subject” (73), including the use of salt. The objection to condiments, salt, spices, and tea appears to have been that these articles were superfluous: serving no apparent biological or nutritional function (body heat or energy), condiments (salt, spices) and tea represented unnecessary excesses.<sup>59</sup> In an earlier issue, the *Dietetic Reformer* had quoted Graham’s influential *Science of Human Life* on salt’s lack of utility: “Salt is wholly innutritious—it affords no nourishment to any structure or substance of the human body” (August 1873, 308). Without any apparent biological purpose, at least not one that could be rationalized according the mechanical understanding of the body, salt and other spices were seen as redundant indulgences and threats to the integrity of the body. They offered flavour, pleasure, and stimulation, but not real nourishment, an argument that Boyle applied to tea: “the stimulus in the case of tea extends even

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<sup>59</sup> For a discussion of sugar and spices as superfluous luxuries in anti-slavery campaigns, see Morton, *The Poetics of Spice*.

to the sexual organs, which makes it particularly improper for young people” (71). The eccentric vegetarians saw the pleasures of the palate intertwined with sexual pleasure. Food should serve a utilitarian purpose, they believed, and wanted to renounce anything that sensualized food or incited the body’s desires.

In a later article, “Concerning Condiments,” Newman contested the utilitarian assumption that “nourishment, in their limited sense of the word, is the only object of food” (Jan 1878, 3). Condiments and spices, he suggested, might serve a purpose undiscovered by science. Advancing an almost humoral theory of food, he proposed that the heat of ginger neutralized the coldness of fruit (5). Spice in general, he claimed, “counteract[ed] the *windiness* of most vegetarian foods” (6), again reminding pure vegetarians that they were very much of this world. However, the point here is not necessarily about the particulars of the debate, but about the two visions of vegetarianism that informed it. Whereas the “eccentric vegetarians” used their diet to control their bodies and demarcate themselves from others, Newman wanted to develop an accessible practice that was open to all. For instance, at the 1875 annual meeting Newman proposed changing the name of the Vegetarian Society to the Dietetic Reform Society, noting that the *Vegetarian Messenger* had undergone a similar change in the 1860 to become the *Dietetic Reformer and Vegetarian Messenger*. The Dietetic Reform Society, he argued, was a more inclusive name that better reflected the various levels of practice within their society. At that annual meeting, Molesworth objected and argued in favour of retaining the title, Vegetarian Society. As the annual report records, Molesworth asserted that “[h]e was a Vegetarian. He took neither milk nor other animal products, and he regarded the name as expressive of the true aim of the movement” (*DR*, Nov. 1875, 287). Molesworth was invested in the label, *vegetarian*, as an exclusive and rigidly defined identity, and he fought to preserve it. Newman’s use of the term “eccentric” (rather than, say, strict, extreme, or pure) to describe Molesworth’s brand of vegetarianism is telling: it suggests that vegetarianism

attracted Molesworth precisely because of its eccentricity and exclusivity. He used it to underline and display his nonconformity and difference from others. In other words, Molesworth wanted to found a sect of strict vegetarians, whereas Newman wanted to popularize vegetarianism.

This internal debate within the VS, a debate that the periodical staged, circulated, and made possible, suggests that vegetarianism at the time was still a fluid, undefined concept. What did it include and exclude? Eggs, milk, and cheese were obvious grey areas, but salt, spices, tea, and coffee also came under scrutiny. Salt in particular confounded vegetarians: did it serve a purpose, or was it a contaminant in the body? As Newman pointed out, salt was found in the blood, sweat, and tears of the human animal—presumably it served a purpose, but was it necessary to add it to food (Jan 1878, 4)? Some readers, neither for or against salt, simply wanted a clear answer: “I am terribly in earnest about this salt question, and for the good of humanity ask that full inquiry be made” (May 1876, 72), wrote a correspondent signed simply as “R.” Newman, as President of the VS, did not impose his views or practice on members and readers, but instead invited dissent, argument, and dialogue. The “oil difficulty,” the problems of hospitality, and the internal strife all reinforced Newman’s belief that the VS required a system of multi-tiered, graduated membership that accommodated varying levels of vegetarian practice. As he argued in 1875, “his desire was to have progressive steps of Dietetical practice, and thus allure associates onward” (Nov. 1875, 286).

### **Serialized Vegetarianism**

To lure new converts onward, Newman, as I have said, appealed to the practice of serialization. Newman first proposed introducing graded membership at the annual meeting of 1871, the same meeting at which he drew attention to the difficulties facing vegetarians. Well aware that he would “not meet with entire agreement” (Jan 1872, 10), he extolled the value of debate: “it is only by comparing thoughts that we can move into unity or become wiser” (10). As he noted, the VS

already contained within it several differing schools of opinion. On the one hand were “the strict feeders” (11), men such as George Dornbusch and the Reverend Molesworth. On the opposite side of the spectrum were those who called themselves vegetarian but were more relaxed in their practice, freely enjoying milk, eggs, butter, oil, and, condiments. Still others, who sympathized with diet reform, continued to eat fish, or renounced flesh only at their own tables. As Newman said, “between these extremes, there is room for difference of opinion” (10). Disagreements were productive, Newman suggested, and the single name, *vegetarian*, did not adequately reflect the differing practices contained within their society. He personally found that he was not ready to live up to the example set by Dornbusch and he proposed formally structuring everyday vegetarian life around stages of development: “being naturally very timid, I always feel my way on, and cannot go far ahead without much time and successive stages” (Jan 1872, 10). Time and stages—serialization, in other words.

To accommodate the differing levels of vegetarianism within the VS, and to draw in outsiders through successive, temporal stages, Newman suggested revising the rules of membership. He believed that, rather than police dietary prohibitions, the vegetarian movement needed to work toward effecting broader cultural shifts in everyday habits. As Newman reminded his fellow vegetarians, “no rule of ours, no direct enforcement, can increase the numbers” of vegetarians (Jan 1872, 11). The vegetarians could invent as many rules as they wanted, but that did not mean any one would follow them. Furthermore, telling people what they could and could not eat appeared to infringe on their liberal freedom. Newman expanded upon the point, which I made in my introduction, that the enforcement of laws could not make new vegetarians; as I pointed out, creating vegetarians required cultivating self-governing, voluntary subjects.

This question of how to associate outsiders, how to incorporate them into the herd of vegetarians, was both practical and economic. At the 1871 Annual Meeting, it occurred to

Newman “to ask, whether certain *grades* of profession might not be allowed within our Society, which would give it far greater material support, enable it to circulate its literature, and at the same retain the instructive spectacle of a select band of strict feeders” (Jan 1872, 11). Instead of subscribing to a declaration of absolute abstinence, a potential recruit on Newman’s plan could convert to vegetarianism gradually across “time and successive stages” (Jan 1872, 10), ascending from the lowest to highest level. Newman suggested having four levels:

#### PROFESSIONS

1. I solemnly purpose to feed on the fruits of the earth only.
2. I solemnly purpose to avoid all flesh of animals killed for food.
3. I solemnly purpose to avoid all flesh of land animals and birds.
4. I am convinced that no flesh meat is needful for human life, and that many evils arise from the struggle to get it; on which account I purpose to avoid this diet, so far as circumstances permit, and to urge its diminution on those who will not wholly give up.  
(11)

The lowest levels of profession would not, Newman conceded, receive the title of members, but would be known as *associates*. Newman thus proposed internally stratifying the VS with full and half citizens, a potentially divisive move; however, he believed that by admitting curious non-vegetarians into their society, acting vegetarians could exert a positive influence on potential recruits, presenting them with a goal to which to aspire. His aim was to bring non-vegetarians into social contact with vegetarians. As he pointed out, vegetarians would not be able to impart their convictions to others, or exercise any form of social influence over them, as long as non-vegetarians were kept beyond the borders of the VS.

The reasoning behind Newman’s associates was moral and practical: he saw associate grades as a more effective and ethical means to mould the conduct of others—primarily because it allowed others to mould their own conduct. As he argued in *Essays on Diet*, “[i]f a pledge conduce to steadiness of conduct (as many find) it would seem expedient to have a *series* of pledges varying in stringency, so that each may follow that which his circumstances allow him to follow” (*Essays* 75). The inspiration for his serialized pledges was pastoral: he modeled his “series



of avowals in steps upwards” on the “vows of some religious communities” (Jan 1872, 11). It was also pastoral in the way it conducted conduct: as Newman stressed, his grades of profession did not impose a law upon others, but instead allowed each new convert to “follow that which his circumstances allow him to follow” (75). Putting in place a series of avowals or pledges allowed inquirers to guide themselves toward vegetarianism. This is how liberal governmentality works: it produces the means for individuals to govern themselves. The most effective way to lead others to vegetarianism was to let them to lead themselves.

Newman’s proposal for a series of vegetarian levels was met with resistance from the strict vegetarians, and his speech generated a fierce internal debate that carried on throughout the years 1872 and 1873 until an amended version of Newman’s initial plan was ultimately ratified for 1874. Like the “warning words” over salt, the disagreement over associates took place in the pages of the *Dietetic Reformer*, but it was also formally debated at the VS’s annual meetings, particularly in 1873. Presidents before Newman had enjoyed the unqualified support from the group, and the VS tried to present a unified front, describing itself as “common ground [...] a bond of brotherhood” (Nov 1877, 190). The controversy over Newman’s associate grades, however, represents an instance of internal dissent within the ranks of the VS, making Newman, as I have said, a paradoxical pastor. Throughout his tenure, he exchanged “warning words” with his own flock, disagreeing with them on the strictness of their practice and the appropriateness of condiments. His presidency reveals how the vegetarian movement was formed not only through opposition to external forces but also internally against itself.

On one side of the debate was the Reverend James Clark, who wrote up and published a list reasons against associates in the August 1873 issue of the journal. Responding to Newman’s speech from 1871, Clark objected that creating an order of associates would set a low standard for aspiring dietary reformers and amount to an admission of weakness by current vegetarians.

Including a lower standard of associates into their ranks would have “an evil influence upon members of the present society” (Aug. 1873, 303), and would inhibit new dietary reformers from progressing to full vegetarianism by “suggesting a lower standard which might be allowed without exclusion from Vegetarians” (303). Even worse, associates would “consider the giving of an annual subscription a sufficient substitute for personal adhesion” (303). Clark was thus concerned with preserving the public image of vegetarianism, which hinged on maintaining the line between vegetarians and non-vegetarians; he believed that all members of the VS must embody their principles through unwavering practice. A lower level of membership would indicate to the outside public that the vegetarian system was too difficult to carry out, and that vegetarians themselves had lost conviction in the practicality of their own beliefs.

In the following month’s issue, Newman responded to each of Clark’s points. He first of all described it as insulting and impolitic to excommunicate aspiring food reformers from their ranks by castigating them as evil influences. But he also candidly acknowledged that he had no problem admitting their diet’s difficulties to the public: “I have no fear confessing simple, certain, and notorious truth. There *is* moral impracticality, as well as physical” (Sept 1873, 318).

Vegetarians needed to confront rather than disavow the complications entailed by their diet; more importantly, Newman rebutted Clark’s claim that association would inhibit newcomers:

Those who now vaguely think that diet needs reforming will be led to define their views more carefully if brought into relations with us; will read our books, exchange thoughts with us, and if we believe that the truth lies with us we must look on such intercourse as likely to *aid* their progress, not *hinder* it (Sept 1873, 318).

Newman argued that “yearly subscription” would not substitute for “personal adhesion” (Aug. 1873303), as Clark contended, but would in fact lead to it. It was through subscription modeled on serialization that he hoped to shape and guide others toward the practice of vegetarianism. By subscribing to the VS, associates would gradually become interested and invested in the vegetarian practice. His plan thus reversed the logic of much vegetarian advocacy: while the VS operated on

the common sense assumption that those who practiced, believed in, and lived as vegetarians would join and financially support the VS, Newman suggested having people invest in, and financially contribute to, vegetarianism before they took up and believed in the practice. By enrolling in and subscribing to the VS first, they would become further interested in it and drawn along into the practice. Essentially, he suggested that people don't financially invest in things that they believe in; they believe in things that they are financially invested in.

Over the following months, readers contributed letters to the journal, siding either with Clark or Newman. The debate created a division between those who wanted to preserve the VS for vegetarians and those who wanted to open it up to outsiders, believing they could effect greater change if they allied themselves with a larger base of social reformers. This debate itself partially realized Newman's vision of progress through the exchange of ideas and dialogue.

Newman and others who defended the scheme for associates presented it as a more practical, ethical, and hospitable tactic insofar as it would include, rather than exclude, those who did not yet follow or entirely agree with their principles. Mr. Haden Guest, a Newman supporter, stated at the 1873 Annual Meeting that he knew "several who said they would join the society at once if such an arrangement could be brought about. They would like to come in, but thought we were sadly too rigid" (Nov 1873, 339). Newman echoed Guest's thoughts, claiming that "he found many of his friends who would be glad to become associates, but they found themselves shut out" (339). The issue, again, was the exclusion of others. But the gift of hospitality offered by Newman and the well-named Mr. Guest was not unconditional: associates in the VS would, of course, still have to pay the yearly subscription, which Clark feared would substitute for their adhesion. The VS did not adopt Newman's four professions (quoted above). Instead, it created a three-tiered system of Members, Associates, and Subscribers, which it printed and defined on the cover of its journal in order to avoid any ambiguity over the definition of each:

SUBSCRIPTION.—The Society is supported by (1) Members, (2) Associates, and (3) Subscribers, to each of whom the Society's magazine is posted monthly. Supporters of each class contribute a minimum subscription of half-a-crown a year. Remittances may be sent in halfpenny, three- halfpenny, or threepenny postage stamps, or in the new postal notes. Penny postages should not be used, except in the case of amounts not exceeding one shilling. Cheques and orders to be payable to Edwin Collier.

[...]

DEFINITIONS.—(a) A "Member" agrees to *adopt* the Vegetarian system of Diet, pays a yearly subscription, may vote at the Society's meetings, receives the Society's magazine, and is eligible for election to any office of the Society. — (b) An "Associate" agrees to *promote* the Vegetarian system, pays a yearly subscription, may attend the Society's meetings, and receives the Society's magazine. — (c) A "Subscriber" pays a yearly subscription, and receives the Society's magazine.

Notably, while each level of affiliation entailed different commitments to promoting and practicing vegetarianism, they all paid at least the same minimum subscription fee. Thus, as I want to say, the pastoral and hospitable elements of Newman's associate grades overlapped with economic motives, and this overlap is what allied his series of pledges with the dynamics of serialization. If fledgling vegetarians needed the guidance of the VS, the society was equally in need of their support. As Newman reportedly argued at the 1873 meeting,

He desired to associate, or to recognize in some way through our society, not only Vegetarians, but that larger body of Dietetic Reformers who, while they did not bind themselves to abstain entirely from flesh, still went a long way in our direction. We needed to enlist their influence on our behalf, their aid in circulating our publications, and their money. [...] his conviction was that unless those persons were in some way organized in connection with us, we lost their support and co-operation. That must keep the society weak. (Nov 1873, 338).

Creating an order of associates had as much to do with guiding others toward vegetarianism as it did with taking their money. Newman was not the first to argue that novices should transition to the vegetarian diet gradually; rather, I describe Newman's scheme for associate grades specifically as "serialized" because of its commercial and consumerist implications. His serialized grades aimed to increase the number of people subscribing to VS, and thus bolster its finances.

More specifically, he wanted to make vegetarianism more accessible to a wider range of consumers, while also building recurrent vegetarian habits of consumption. On his plan,

interested food reformers would no longer have to “pledge themselves outright” and could instead spread out their conversion along “a series of avowals, in steps upwards” (Jan 1872, 11), thus multiplying the potential number of subscribers and contributors. For Newman, it was “no small thing to renounce butchers’ meat only” (11). Newman frequently called upon his friends in the society not to disparage small things and part measures: “We are in a state of transition. A future age will look back on this as barbarism; yet we are moving towards the higher and nobler development in becoming even thus partial vegetarians” (“VEM” 16). One could, under Newman’s partial vegetarianism, become a vegetarian on the instalment plan, and thus Newman dissolved the borders of the strict vegetarian identity, which was based on a vow of abstinence. While it made life easier for the new convert, it also benefited the finances VS. The objective was similar to that of commercial serialization: to access different niche audiences and maximise distribution. Creating lower levels of commitment, on which individuals could subscribe to the VS without actually practicing vegetarianism, allowed the VS to draw funds from a much wider base. Newman brought the society what it needed to sustain itself: new subscribers. Like publishers of periodicals and part-issue books, Newman adopted the model of serialization to make vegetarianism possible or practicable for new audiences, who perhaps could not commit to complete abstinence, but could transition toward it in parts. Understanding the significance of Newman’s partial vegetarianism requires that we further look at the financial situation of the VS in the late 1860s.

### **The Vegetarian Revival**

Newman joined the VS at critical point in its history. In 1868, he was one of only six new members to enlist in the organization—which perhaps explains why, with so few new faces coming through the door, the vegetarians greeted the conversion of Newman as an extraordinary

coup.<sup>60</sup> When Newman enrolled, vegetarianism was on the wane, enduring what Newman described in his first lecture as “its period of weakness” (“On Vegetarianism,” 1). The VS needed internal renewal as much as outward growth. Its original members were beginning to age and in some cases die. New recruits, especially during the lean years of the 1860s, were not lining up to take the place of the dead. The lowest ebb was 1864: only two new members joined that year, a rate of population growth that would not ensure the intergenerational survival of the VS.

Despite the VS’s vision of steady, consistent progress, its annual reports reveal a pattern of diminishing and inconsistent growth over its first twenty five years: an initial burst of activity at the VS’s foundation in 1847, which carried on throughout the 1850s under the presidency of James Simpson; a period of decline in the 1860s; and a “reawakening” beginning in the 1870s and peaking in the late 80s (see figure 5.7 below). The January 1872 issue of the *Dietetic Reformer*, the same issue in which Newman introduced his plan for associate grades, reflected on and summarized the VS’s membership and finances up until that year. By 1872 the Society “[had] been in existence for about twenty-five years” and since its foundation in 1847 it had enrolled a total of one thousand, six hundred and nineteen members (1619), but, as the editors admitted in a footnote, this “growth [had] been fitful”:

Before its first five years had ended upwards of one thousand accessions had been received. Little more than half as many have joined in the remaining twenty years. Shown in quinquennial periods the figures are as under. Its largest ingathering was during its first year. Its smallest, (two only), during the year 1864. During its first period (strictly one of four years and four months), to the end of 1851, there were enrolled 929 members (Jan 1872, 6)

As the report went on to detail, decline set in after the VS’s first five-year period (1847-1851). In the next quinquennial period, 1852 to the end of 1856, it enrolled four hundred and forty-six

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<sup>60</sup> Another notable convert that year was a young, twenty-three year old William E.A. Axon, the Manchester librarian and historian who went on to become a prominent supporter of vegetarianism into the twentieth century, penning numerous articles for the *Dietetic Reformer* and serving as the VS’s treasurer and secretary.

(446) members; to the end of 1861, one hundred and thirty one (131); to the end of 1866, merely forty-six (46); and to the end of 1871, sixty-seven (67), giving the total of one thousand, six hundred and nineteen members (1619). However, it is important to note that of this total number of enrolments not all were still active vegetarians in 1872: “many have died, some have left the Society, and a greater number still have been lost sight of” (Jan 1872, 6). Established in 1847, the VS began to lose many of its members in the 1870s to death. Among the losses were not only the rank and file, but also key leadership figures: in the first three years of the 1870s, the VS mourned the loss of “such munificent friends as the late Alderman Harvey, James Gaskell, James Haughton, and George Dornsbusch, not to mention other names less known, though probably not less worth of our grateful remembrance” (Nov. 1873, 346). In October 1870, when Newman was still a relatively young vegetarian, the *Dietetic Reformer* announced that “two of our veteran standard-bearers [have] been called to another world” (Oct 1870, 97). John Smith, the author of the canonical manifesto on vegetarianism, *Fruits and Farinacea*, died on August 12, 1870, and James Gaskell, a founding member and perennial attendee at the annual banquets, passed away on August 17, 1870. Gaskell was remembered in his obituary as yet another embodied argument: “[a] picture of robust health and fine animal spirits, his presence was a speech” (Oct 1870, 98). The deaths of these veterans, represented a double loss: it not only reduced the VS’s numbers, but also deprived it of one of its principal tools for advocacy—the signifying presence of the robust vegetarian body.

What the Annual Reports make evident, through references to deaths and other losses, is that a key problem for the VS was not just dissemination, but reproduction. Self-replication, rather than expansion, represented one the biggest challenges for the vegetarian movement during this period: the VS needed to replace those whom it continually lost through death. As the *Dietetic Reformer* continued to lament in 1873, “[w]e lose every year by death friends whose help can ill be

spared. Others are needed to take their places, we believe they may be found” (Aug 1873, 302).

The VS had to repeat itself, to attract young recruits simply to maintain itself against the centrifugal forces of atrophy; death depleted its ranks. Vegetarianism was, essentially, a practice of social reproduction, and its progress was bound up with the repetitive experiences of everyday life: the primary objective in disseminating vegetarianism was to get people to carry on and reproduce the practice, ensuring its survival. The dissemination of vegetarianism had to progress through the continual repetition and replication of vegetarianism by vegetarians. As the 1873 Annual Report noted, repetition and forward progress were synonymous:

The loss which time brings about in the ranks of our supporters, by the death of some and the defection of others, suggests the need for a constant and considerable replacement if the roll of adherents is to be maintained. Continual recruiting must go on if we are to make any discernable progress. (Nov. 1873, 346).

Recruit, from Latin, *recrescere*, means to re-grow or to grow again. The VS had to repeat itself in order to produce something new. Going forward (“discernable progress”) required replacing the past through “continual recruitment” or re-growth. Each new vegetarian recruit was a reiteration of previous vegetarians and acts of vegetarianism. In this process of growing and re-growing, time was both an ally and enemy of the VS: the accumulation of time was necessary to prove vegetarianism—the carefully documented periods of abstinence demonstrated the possibility of a vegetable diet—but time also disrupted the continuity of the VS. Even the healthiest vegetarian had to die at some point.

Death brought discontinuity, severing the VS from its past, but also made possible new interpretations of vegetarianism. As I have said, the dissemination of vegetarianism was linked to repetition, but repetition also opened up the possibility that one could repeat differently. And thus, insofar as the linear course of “progress” depended on constant repetition and replacement, it inevitably introduced changes to the constitution of the VS and the practice of vegetarianism.



Newman's introduction of serialized vegetarianism participated in the reawakening and revival of the VS, but this re-growth of the VS also brought about a subtle transformation.

After reaching a low ebb in the 1860s, the VS embarked on a project of regeneration in the 1870s that was led by Newman, its new president. He recognized the problems facing the VS: "Our death rate is too near our rate of increase by converts," he argued (*DR*, Sept 1873, 311). As part of the vegetarian renaissance, the VS embarked on what its Executive Committee described as "increased efforts for the diffusion of the knowledge of Vegetarianism" (Oct 1871, 91). In particular, "[s]pecial efforts" were made "to bring back the lapsed and associate the isolated" (Jan. 1872, 6). At the start of the 1870s, after years of steady decline, enrolments began to increase, and the VS actively searched for new ways to increase its funds, membership, and visibility, believing that there was "a greater need than ever for preaching the pure gospel of Vegetarianism" (Nov. 1873, 337). Seizing upon Newman's name was part of this project, but Newman also developed strategies for recruitment. Reflecting on the VS's history in 1885, William Axon credited Newman's measures with reinvigorating the VS's campaign (*DR*, May 1885, 127). Newman's plans for associate grades and serialized vegetarianism were designed to draw in new recruits, but also, as I have mentioned, to generate more income for the VS. When its established members died, the VS lost not only advocates but also its financial support.

The VS never seems to have earned a profit, or even to have been self-supporting. In its first ten years, the *Vegetarian Messenger* relied on from James Simpson, the wealthy first president of the VS who funded its propaganda operations at his own expense. As William Axon revealed in his *Sixty Years of the Vegetarian Society*, "in the early years much of the cost of the propaganda, of the great banquets, soirees, lecturing, printing and publishing came from the purse of the first president, and did not even pass through the books of the Vegetarian Society" (5). Simpson's death in 1859, as Axon notes, "was a great loss to the cause" (4), particularly in financial.

Following his death, the “operations for the promotion of Vegetarianism” (Oct 1871, 91) rested “upon the shoulders of a few generous and liberal contributors” (August 1873, 301).<sup>61</sup>

To bolster the society’s income and address its reliance on a few liberal donors, many of whom were passing away, the *Dietetic Reformer* began to place greater emphasis on individual subscriptions, regularly circulating “special notices” that asked readers for “increased financial support for the coming year” (Nov. 1873, 341). Distributed to members in advance of annual meetings, these internal communications presented the Executive Committee’s plans for future action, plans which would then be debated at the meeting itself. One new measure proposed and adopted in 1873 was the appointment of a full-time Secretary; another, proposed by Newman, was the introduction of a yearly May conference in addition to the annual meetings in October. These special circulars also suggested lines of action that readers could pursue in their daily lives to aid the VS’s efforts. Propagandistic activities included: arranging for lectures in one’s town or community; bringing up the subject of diet in public venues, such as mutual improvement societies; distributing literature at libraries and clubs; enlisting new subscribers to the *Dietetic Reformer*; writing letters to one’s local newspaper; and using one’s personal influence in social situations. The Committee wanted active vegetarians—hence the barely disguised disdain for isolated vegetarians, those who practiced the diet without advocating it or, crucially, without joining the VS. Perhaps the most intrusive tactic to attract lapsed or potential recruits was the Committee’s request for their names and addresses: “Send us their names. Such persons are known to every one of our readers. Do what you can, and send us information” (Aug 1873, 302). One wonders how these prospective converts greeted the proselytizing abstainers who may have arrived on their doorsteps.

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<sup>61</sup> For instance, James Gaskill, after his death in 1870, left the VS a legacy of £300, a figure which, though less than the £1000 he bequeathed to the United Kingdom Alliance, represented a significant supplement to the VS’s actual income for that year (1870-1871) of £62.

These efforts appear to have met with some success. The VS's annual reports show an increase of contributors and income in the 1870s, increases which the society took as signs of progress. In the Annual Report for 1872-73 (which again came with a special appeal to members asking for financial support), the Executive Committee could boast of regular, yearly improvements in its finances and in the number of subscribers: "it represents a pleasing commentary on the work of the past year that the total income of the year [from subscriptions, the sale of literature, and advertisements] has reached £170" (Nov 1873, 346). This sum nearly doubled the income of the previous year, 1871-72, (£93 14s. 9d.), and more than tripled the income of three years previous, 1869-70, in which the society brought in £49 6s 7d. A particularly encouraging sign was "the healthy increase" in receipts from the sale of literature, from £5 in 1869-70 to £28 in 1872-73. Literature that had been purchased, rather than distributed freely, suggested that it was more likely to be perused in the home, and it indicated a growing interest in vegetarian ideas. Furthermore, the VS took pleasure in reporting "not only an increase in the amount of subscriptions, but in the number of those who have subscribed" (Nov 1873, 346): from 115 subscribers and donors in 1870-71, to 185 the following year 1871-72, and 278 in 1872-73. These gains continued throughout the decade. In 1874-75, the VS received subscriptions and donations from 735 persons, had a total income of £348 19s 3d, and enlisted 84 new members, which was more than any other year since 1855. The VS had returned to the recruitment levels of its early golden age. More importantly, however, the year 1874-75 was the first year in which the Society admitted *associates*, enrolling 187, more than double the number of members for that year. The following year this trend continued: the VS conscripted 108 full members and 229 associates. Newman's associate grades and serialized vegetarianism thus undeniably improved the VS's financial resources.

One of the most significant changes introduced during VS's reawakening was its proposal, in 1871, to "change the *Dietetic Reformer* from a quarterly issue at 3d. to a monthly at 2d." (Oct 1871, 91). This change came into effect in January 1872, the same issue in which Newman introduced his plan for associate grades; thus, as I want to suggest, the monthly serialization of the journal complemented and overlapped with Newman's program of serialized vegetarianism. As the first monthly issue of 1872 told readers,

With the New Year the *Dietetic Reformer* appears in a changed shape. But half the bulk of its quarterly predecessor, it ventures to be henceforth a monthly messenger. Its visits, we are assured from many invitations, will be only the more welcome as they become more frequent. The proposal for this change, made early last year, and continually repeated during its course, was referred to in the 'Special Circular' issued prior to our annual meeting, and has met with general approbation. (Jan. 1872, 1).

As a monthly visitor, the journal worked as a shepherd watching over the sheep, employing the serial rhythms of the press to bind together the community of vegetarian readers and eaters. However, this transition from a bulky quarterly to a sleek monthly messenger brought with it "a considerable financial responsibility" (4)—hence the "Special Circular" asking for increased donations and subscriptions from readers and members to fund the move to a monthly. Thus, the serial journal both provided the model for, but also desperately need the money from, the practice of serialized vegetarianism. Serial membership and serial print fed each other.

In the competitive publication market that followed the repeal of newspapers taxes, most periodicals made money through advertising, not sales of individual issues. As James Curran argues, after the price of papers dropped in the 1850s and again in the 60s, newspapers came to depend "on advertising for their profits since their net cover prices no longer met their costs. Advertisers thus acquired a *de facto* licensing power since, without their support, newspapers ceased to be economically viable" (Curran 34). An unpopular journal with a small readership, the *Dietetic Reformer* could not attract lucrative advertisers or rely on advertising revenue; indeed, the journal's emphasis on abstinence and self-denial may have made it an unappealing place for

commercial advertising. The journal also refused to display any products it deemed unhygienic or cruel. The journal and VS thus largely relied on subscriptions and donations: in 1874-75 it made £227 16s. from subscriptions and donations and only £3 5s. 5d. from advertising. The *Dietetic Reformer* was, therefore, more financially beholden to its readers than advertisers. This reliance on patronage rather than advertising meant that the journal remained independent of the censorship of advertisers (Curran 34-35), but it also meant that it had to work constantly to attract new readers, without upsetting the expectations of the established base. Radical changes to content, or indeed to the makeup of the VS itself, risked alienating core supporters. Newman's proposal to admit non-vegetarian associates represented one such risk, drawing ire from some; however, according to annual reports, it appears to have paid off, expanding the VS's subscriber list.

The switch to a monthly magazine, and the emphasis it placed subscriptions, marked a shift in the position and representation of members in the VS. Whereas the cover of the first issue of the *Vegetarian Messenger* (1849) advertised the "Statistics of Members," quantifying their "*Periods of Abstinence*" in months and years, the cover of the January 1872 issue of the *Dietetic Reformer* printed a table quantifying the amount of members' subscriptions. Members were represented as subscribers rather than abstainers. Whereas they were once valued for their embodiment of vegetarianism, advocating the diet through health and labour, they could now exercise their vegetarian agency through money: becoming a consumer of texts was as important as being a consumer of vegetables. For example, in August 1873, the *Dietetic Reformer* drew attention to "numerous and inviting" directions for "the promotion of Vegetarianism" (Aug. 1873, 301), but claimed that, in order to realize them, "additional funds are urgently required, and unless they are subscribed, the work before us must be sadly curtailed" (301). The journal provided a list of ways in which friends and well-wishers could help, and the order of this list draws attention to the VS's prioritization of subscription: "1. By subscriptions and donations [...] 2. By promoting the circulation of the

*Dietetic Reformer* [...] 3. *By enlisting recruits*” (301). Promoting vegetarianism was becoming synonymous with promoting and subscribing to the vegetarian periodical, the *Dietetic Reformer*.

In the months leading up to the Annual Meeting of 1873, the Executive Committee yet again circulated a private appeal among members, asking them for donations and increased subscriptions. Toward the end of that year, in November 1873, the Committee published a copy of their appeal, or “private circular,” in the *Dietetic Reformer*, laying it “before our entire body of readers” (Nov 1873, 341). Directly following this missive, the Executive appended a series of responses they had already received. Thus, those who had answered the call to action had the pleasure of seeing their names and contributions valorized in print. The effect, by publishing the appeal alongside these advanced pledges of support, was to create a model of commitment for others readers to imitate. I give a selection of the responses (see also figure 5.6 below):

John Davie, Esq. [who was the treasurer of the VS]—“In reply to the circular, you can put me down for this year for £3, in addition to my ordinary subscription of £2, making £5 for this year.”

William Wilkie—“In reply to the circular, I enclose P.O.O. for 5s., which sum I shall regard as my annual subscription.”

Mr. George Newman, Gloucester—“In response to the circular, father requests me to enclose you [a] cheque for two guineas.”

Mr. James Shield, 22, Lord-street, Liverpool—“I shall be glad to increase my subscription for the coming to £2”

Mr. Chas Flint.—“I will agree to subscribe £1 per annum for three years, and should the Society exhibit the living, active properties I know it possesses, this shall not be the limit of my subscription.”

Mr. SB Sutcliffe—“I am really glad to see that an earnest effort is to be made in the direction indicated. Please put my name down for 10s. per year. Wish I could do more, as I consider the movement worthy of generous support.”

“C”—“I am ready, in all ways, to contribute to the utmost of my ability. I am a very poor man, but I hereby engage to increase my subscription of 2s. 6d. to 10s. per annum. I do not think you will have much difficulty about funds if all friends will increase their contributions in the same ratio.”

J.S. (Liverpool)—“In reply to the private circular, I would have no particular objection to increase my yearly subscription of 5s. to 10s. If those of limited means would but increase their subscriptions of 2s. 6d. to double the amount and those whose means are not so

limited would also increase their much larger subscriptions, a sufficient sum would soon be realized to meet your requirements”

“W.O.” (The second name on the Society’s register).—“I am too much interested in Vegetarianism not to avail myself of the opportunity to assist in its extension, if I possessed the means. But, as my income is very small, I am unable to do more than double my present subscription, or say, if you carry out your proposed plan, I will try to send you £1 every January that I remain in the physical body. I will do all I can to circulate tracts, and otherwise help on this very good work.” (*DR*, Nov 1873, 342)

These letters, taken together, suggest that, whereas one could once serve the VS by practicing, performing, and embodying vegetarianism, one was now expected to contribute financially as well. When the VS first formed, its funding was taken care of by James Simpson, and it therefore needed members not for their money but for their bodies. The VS staked its claims on the physical body of the vegetarian, countering the cultural desire for animal flesh with a public demonstration of farinaceous-fed human flesh. The sign of the individual vegetarian’s personal commitment to the cause was the number of years he or she had remained abstinent; with each passing year they became more invested in their practice of abstinence. In these responses, however, we see a different tactic at work and a different way of representing and quantifying vegetarians—indeed, a different way of investing in vegetarianism: not through the body but through subscription. In the last response, “W.O.” draws attention to his “physical body” not for its embodiment of vegetarianism, but as the utmost limit of his pledge to support the VS financially. If the “living, active properties” of the VS first depended upon the biology of its members, it came to rely on their cash donations.

By publishing these letters, the *Dietetic Reformer* gratified the egos of the contributors, who saw their names in print, and it supplied a model of action for others to emulate. The contributors saw themselves as the saviours of the VS, sacrificing their limited means to carry out the future plans for action. All of these replies, published together on the same page of the *Dietetic Reformer*, created an image of unified, collective action. The implication was that any earnest vegetarian

should, like W.O., desire to be a part of that close circle of “friends” who are “too interested in Vegetarianism [...] not to assist in its extension” (342). These vegetarians demonstrated their interest in vegetarianism by investing their money in the VS. And, by seeing their contributions and support reflected in print, they in turn became affectively as well as financially invested in the cause. The objective of the VS was, as always, to induce habits of abstinence from flesh, but, after reading through these responses to the special appeals, it becomes unclear whether members were valued for their practice of abstinence or for their subscription to the *Dietetic Reformer*.

It appears, then, that the VS’s new monthly journal was no longer simply the means or instrument for advocating vegetarianism, but the ultimate objective of advocacy. For instance, the August 1875 issue of the *Dietetic Reformer* began with an address to readers that positioned the periodical as the key object of advocacy: “Few wants are more urgent than the enlargement, even in a small degree, of our monthly magazine” (Aug. 1875, 239). The diffusion of vegetarianism here becomes bound up with the expansion of the monthly magazine, making it unclear which was the means and which the end. The monthly magazine, as the editors noted, “commenced as an experiment, with much anxiety, in lieu of our quarterly, in January 1872” (239). Since then, “its usefulness [had] been abundantly manifest” (239), but “the financial burden [was] inexorable” and the editors again appealed to readers for support: “Will every reader gain us a new subscriber?” (239). Notably, the VS here does not ask its readers to gain them a new vegetarian, but a new subscriber. The VS wanted above all else new subscribers. This new emphasis on subscription over practice may have reflected a broader shift in the VS’s audience and membership: whereas in the 1840s vegetarianism was preached to working class radicals and Bible Christians in Manchester’s poor districts (Pickering and Tyrrell 461), in the years of the revival its audience seems to have become much more middleclass, while vegetarianism itself developed into a consumerist lifestyle catered to by new metropolitan restaurants and commodities. Newman’s



grade of associates made it possible for the VS to draw funds from those who entertained an interest in the fad for food reform and natural living, but who may not have been strict ascetics.

The January 1872 issue *Dietetic Reformer* represents a significant moment in the VS's history not only because it marks a return to monthly issues, but, as noted, because it features Newman's proposed reforms to the rules for membership: on Newman's plan, which came into effect in 1874, one could subscribe to the VS without practicing vegetarianism, thus consolidating the increasing importance of paying for vegetarianism over practicing it. Hence, what became known as the "reawakening" (*VM*, Nov 1897, 395) of the VS under Newman was both a regeneration and a transformation. At the same time the VS began valuing its members as serial subscribers, Newman proposed reforming the very structure of the society along the lines of serialization, suggesting that this genre not only disseminated vegetarianism but actively shaped its conduct.

## **Conclusion**

The aim of this chapter has been to demonstrate that the serial form of the periodical, and not just its content (articles, reports, facts, statistics, letters, recipes), served as pastoral technique in the vegetarian movement, a technique for guiding others toward vegetarianism. Newman aimed not to make complete converts, but to set people on their way toward vegetarianism. He argued that instituting a series of professions, rather than one declaration of abstinence, would give individuals the freedom to conform to vegetarianism on their own terms

As I noted, James Clark objected to Newman's proposed grade of non-practicing associates on the grounds that new associates would consider "giving an annual subscription a sufficient substitute for personal adhesion" (*DR*, Aug 1873, 303). He and other vegetarians believed that those who preached, promoted, and paid for the diet ought to practice it. Newman too seems to have personally felt this way, believing that he needed to experiment on himself before advocating the diet to others, but he also campaigned to make it possible for those unable

to practice vegetarianism to contribute to the cause, ultimately leading to the creation of associate grades. In the 1870s and 80s, he continued to argue for further degrees of associates (for instance, a designation that would permit fish, but forbid land animals), contending that upward degrees of profession (first, second, third, fourth degrees) would inspire the progress of associates. The problems and conflicts of hospitality, of living ethically in the world with others, motivated his reforms: liberalized strictures around abstinence would make it easier for young food reformers to sit at the table with their non-vegetarian families, while it would also allow the VS to invite curious outsiders to attend their meetings and read their literature. But, as I have detailed, this act of openness and hospitality was not completely disinterested. Death and desertions continued to deplete the society's ranks, while complete or full conversions remained rare. The VS had little choice but to open up its doors and relinquish some of its adherence to strict vegetarianism.

The changes Newman introduced to the VS were significant: one no longer had to be a vegetarian to attend a meeting of the VS, disrupting the longstanding association between living as a vegetarian and advocating vegetarianism. James Clark and many of the remaining old guard feared that the new rules “would make an annual subscription a substitute for personal adhesion” (Sept 1873, 317), but this in some ways was precisely the point: to model the practice of serialized vegetarianism on serial subscription in the press; and to gain more subscribers to, and a wider financial base for, the journal. I have thus tried to describe a change in vegetarian tactics that also changed the meaning of vegetarianism. It became conceptualized as a serial consumer practice rather than an ascetic moral identity. With the increasing popularization of vegetarianism in the 1870s and 1880s, one could visit a vegetarian restaurant, or subscribe to a vegetarian journal, without necessarily being a strict vegetarian. Newman's plan for associates mitigated the threat of death and discontinuity to the VS by diminishing the central importance of life—or living testimony—in its propaganda.

PROFESSOR F. W. NEWMAN  
ON  
VEGETARIANISM.

Manchester, October 14th, 1868.

[Reprinted from the *Dietetic Reformer*, of January, 1869.]

It is assuredly a noble delight to take part in a triumphant society which counts its advocates by the hundred thousand, and is bringing some good cause to a successful issue. But, as I feel it, there is also a serene pleasure in belonging to a great movement during its period of weakness, if we so approve the soundness of its basis as to see by faith its future extended honour, and its substantial services in each passing year. Unless I were able, in some such way, to glorify our society, I probably should not have wished to belong to it, and could not with propriety now address you. I think it will not be unacceptable to you to hear, even from one so young in the cause, what are in my view the functions and (if I may so phrase it) the high calling of the society.

Figure 5.4: A pamphlet edition of Newman's first speech on vegetarianism, on which his name appears prominently. Notably, Newman claims to have joined VS "during its period of weakness." *Google Books*.

AND VEGETARIAN MESSENGER. 13

Queries, Replies, and Suggestions.

PEANUT OIL.—I read with great interest about the American peanut oil. What is a peanut?—F. W. N.

MEMBERS' LIST.—I was obliged for the list of members and associates, which I hope will be annual, as in the days of the late Mr. Simpson.—J. H.

ALGAROBAS.—The fruit so much used in Portugal and Austria under the names of "Algarobas" and "Johannesbrod" is your St. John's bread or Carob bean.—E. WELSHAEUSER.

"J. M. E." inquires if there be any Vegetarian Club in London, or any restaurant where Vegetarians can find suitable fare? He would gladly join such a club, and induce others to do so.

MILLS FOR WHEAT MUSH.—I shall be happy to help "A. D." or anyone else, (see *D. R.* for October, page 268,) to a suitable mill of any calibre if he will write to G. B., Grasmere Lodge, Stoke Bishop, Bristol.

SPANISH BEANS.—Do you know that Spanish beans are being sold [in November] in Castle-street, Leicester Square, London? I bought some, and cooked them in place of haricot beans. They are eaten throughout Spain just as haricots are in France and Germany.—E. J. L.

RIPEWED WHEAT.—I think it would be a great help if anyone were to import wheat from Sicily, or Barbary, or Egypt: wheat grows and ripens perfectly in those countries. If someone would write a scientific article on the subject of the cereals, including millet, lentils, &c., and the different wheats, it would be greatly interesting.—E. J. L.

Figure 5.5: *Dietetic Reformer*, Jan 1876. Newman's question on peanut oil finds itself embedded within other questions and answers on vegetarianism. *Vegetarian Society Archives*.

"Dr. Brodie will be happy to contribute 10s. to the amount proposed to be raised for the year 1873-4."

John Davie, Esq.—"In reply to the circular, you can put me down for this year for £3, in addition to my ordinary subscription of £2, making £5 for this year."

William Wilkie.—"In reply to the circular, I enclose P.O.O. for 5s., which sum I shall regard as my annual subscription."

Mr. George Newman, Gloucester.—"In response to the circular, father requests me to enclose you cheque for two guineas."

Mr. James Shield, 22, Lord-street, Liverpool.—"I shall be glad to increase my subscription for coming year to £2."

Mr. Chas. Flint.—"I will agree to subscribe £1 per annum for three years; and should the Society exhibit the living, active properties I know it possesses, this shall not be the limit of my subscription."

Mr. S. B. Sutcliffe.—"I am really glad to see that an earnest effort is to be made in the direction indicated. Please put my name down for 10s. per year. Wish I could do more, as I consider the movement worthy of generous support."

J. S. H.—"In response to your appeal, my sister and self, under the name of 'Two Life Teetotallers,' will give a subscription of £1 for three years, instead of our usual one."

Arthur Trevelyan, Esq., J.P.—In reply to circular of the 30th ult., with compliments to your Executive, I will contribute £5 annually, for three years, to the proposed fund for advancing the cause of Vegetarianism.

"C."—"I am ready, in *all* ways, to contribute to the utmost of my ability. I am a very poor man, but I hereby engage to increase my subscription of 2s. 6d. to 10s. per annum. I do not think you will have much difficulty about funds if all friends will increase their contributions in the same ratio."

J. S. (Liverpool).—"In reply to the private circular, I would have no particular objection to increase my yearly subscription of 5s. to 10s. If those of limited means would but increase their subscriptions of 2s. 6d. to double the amount, and those whose means are not so limited would also increase their much larger subscriptions, a sufficient sum would soon be realised to meet your requirements."

"W. O." (the second name on the Society's register).—"I am too much interested in Vegetarianism not to avail myself of the opportunity to assist in its extension, if I possessed the means. But, as my income is very small, I am unable to do more than double my present subscription, or say, if you carry out your proposed plan, I will try to send you £1 every January that I remain in the physical body. I will do all I can to circulate tracts, and otherwise help on this very good work."

R. Arnold Wainwright, Esq.—"The object which the Executive have in view seems to me most deserving of the support, not merely of strict Vegetarians, but also of those who, though not strict Vegetarians, share with them the conviction that the value of flesh diet is greatly over-estimated by the public. I can scarcely conceive of anything better calculated to promote the wellbeing of the poorer classes than to remove the mistaken belief that strength can only be maintained by the use of animal food; and I shall have great pleasure in affording assistance towards the accomplishment of the Society's present object. You may therefore insert me as a donor of five guineas."

Figure 5.6: Responses to the Executive Committee's "Private Circular," *Dietetic Reformer*, Nov 1873, 342. *Vegetarian Society Archives*.

For the Year	Number of Contributors in each Year.	Members Enrolled in each Year.	Associates Enrolled in each Year.	INCOME FROM				
				Subscriptions and Donations.	Sales of Publications, &c.	Advertisements.	From other Sources.	TOTAL.
1870-1	125	30	..	£ s. d. 48 1 0	£ s. d. 13 4 7	£ s. d. ....	£ s. d. 1 2 0	£ 62
1871-2	157	38	..	70 15 4	17 17 7	....	5 1 10	94
1872-3	285	20	..	130 12 10	28 11 6	1 4 0	9 14 7	170
1873-4	419	52	..	188 3 0	56 8 5	0 8 9	5 3 1	250
1874-5	735	84	187	227 16 0	105 6 7	3 5 6	12 11 2	349
1875-6	1152	108	229	311 11 10	178 16 5	18 12 0	10 7 0	519
1876-7	1458	125	184	403 10 5	162 0 4	31 7 6	15 14 0	612
1877-8	1550	117	122	366 7 9	126 13 3	30 1 11	10 10 9	533
1878-9	1980	118	106	464 13 11	295 0 6	31 0 7	11 3 8	802
1879-80	1680	95	96	435 10 2	241 14 2	31 18 1	30 8 3	774
1880-1	2070	82	104	571 2 7	165 14 11	93 0 1	9 13 4	840
1881-2	2008	98	67	618 13 3	304 16 2	90 4 6	8 4 0	1022
1882-3	1970	120	55	636 10 4	313 17 9	74 4 0	65 5 5	1090
1883-4	1879	104	47	626 2 3	547 1 1*	112 5 8	33 0 0	1318‡
1884-5	1630	147	97	740 7 3½	512 12 7†	180 19 3	69 2 3	1508‡
1885-6	1651	120	50	685 4 2½	436 3 8½	154 16 6	209 10 2	1485‡
1886-7	1657	119	84	661 12 11½	462 5 10½	173 5 7	140 13 11½	1438
1887-8	1766	131	85	625 3 9½	372 2 8½	139 15 8½	32 0 7½	1169
1888-9	1672	92	91	648 11 5½	282 10 3½	110 10 10	23 11 0	1060
1889-90	1374	75	59	637 6 10¶	237 16 1	146 0 10	116 16 6½	1138
1890-1	1426	91	60	629 6 3½	279 19 10	151 10 2	46 2 0	1107

Figure 5.7: "Statistics," *Vegetarian Messenger*, Nov 1891, 337. These statistics, taken from the 1891 annual report, reveal the history of the VS's income and enrolments. *Vegetarian Society Archives*.

## 6. Serialized Eating: Beatrice Lindsay and The Everyday Tactics of Vegetarianism in the Late Nineteenth Century

The theory of Vegetarianism has been mostly advocated by gentlemen; the practice of it must be undertaken by the ladies. We need an army of lady speakers and teachers of plain cookery.

—Beatrice Lindsay, speaking at the Vegetarian Society’s Annual Meeting, 1891.

Moreover, alimentary habits constitute a domain where tradition and innovation matter equally, where past and present are mixed to serve the needs of the hour, to furnish the joy of the moment, and to suit the circumstance. With their high degree of ritualization and their strong affective investment, culinary activities are for many women of all ages a place of happiness, pleasure, and discovery.

—Luce Giard, *The Practice of Everyday Life Volume 2*.

In July 1883, the official organ of the VS, the *Dietetic Reformer*, announced that one of its subscribers, Beatrice Lindsay, a student at Girton College, Cambridge, had recently passed her examinations in Natural Science with honours (*DR*, July 1883, 200). Two years later the journal appointed Lindsay as its editor, making her the first female editor in its history (*DR*, Sept. 1885, 256). Other than these details and a handful of facts that I have gleaned from the pages of the *Dietetic Reformer*, I know little about the life of “Miss Beatrice Lindsay.”<sup>62</sup> She does not figure in the academic studies of the movements she supported—vegetarianism, feminism, and animal rights—possibly because her tactics, particularly in the case of vegetarianism, targeted everyday routines rather than political or legal reform. As a “Girton Girl” and the editor of a humanitarian organ, Lindsay was both a product and agent of social change. Her advanced education and employment outside of the home align her with the characteristics of the emerging “New Woman,” while her work in press provides us with a nodal point to examine the late-Victorian intersection of

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<sup>62</sup> I am grateful to Susan Furmage at the VS for her help narrowing down the dates of Lindsay’s editorship, which, as far as we could determine, ended by 1895.

vegetarianism and feminism. Lindsay contributed to scientific journals—her meticulously illustrated paper on the evolution of the avian sternum in the *Proceedings of the Zoological Society* established her as an authority on the subject<sup>63</sup>—and in the 1890s she began publishing works of popular science: a comprehensive *Introduction to the Study of Zoology* (1895), which she intended both as a guide to the amateur and as a lesson in humane science, and *The Story of Animal Life* (1902), which appeared as part of George Newness’s *Library of Useful Stories*. Her literary output for the VS—book reviews, editorials, columns on cookery, and correspondence with other journals—falls within the category of ephemera, but, as I want to contend, this material is significant precisely for its ephemerality and engagement with the quotidian. In her monthly interactions with readers, she blended New Journalistic intimacy with scientific terminology, at once challenging the masculine ownership of science and enabling her female readers to transform daily routines into “a place of happiness, pleasure, and discovery” (151), as my epigraph from Luce Giard puts it. Vegetarians and animal rights activists from the nineteenth century are often heralded for being ahead of their times—indeed, these are precisely the terms that Peter Singer uses to introduce the 1980 reissue of Henry Salts’ *Animals’ Rights Considered in Relation to Social Progress* (Singer x). By contrast, I suggest that Lindsay’s imbrication in her times and in the “periodical time” (Turner 183) of Victorian print culture allowed her to respond to the needs of her readers, and to popularize the eccentric practice of vegetarianism. Lindsay’s contributions to the *Dietetic Reformer* demonstrate that this advocacy journal fulfilled a much wider social function than propaganda. Rather, page by page, issue by issue, vegetarian media sustained a conversation on re-imagining tastes, collective identities, and cultural practices in late-Victorian England.

When Lindsay took the helm “as Editor in the service of the Vegetarian Society” (*DR*, Sept. 1885, 256), the VS’s journal was still known as the *Dietetic Reformer and Vegetarian Messenger*,

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<sup>63</sup> As recently as 1985, a paper in the *Journal of the Royal Society of New Zealand* cited Lindsay’s work on avian evolution (Beale 193).

but during her tenure it returned to its original title of the *Vegetarian Messenger*. By Lindsay's time, the journal had developed from a plain newsheet into a wide-ranging miscellany that conveyed a variety of messages to different vegetarian and non-vegetarian audiences, attempting to appeal to readers inside and outside of the fold. During Lindsay's reign, it continued to advocate abstinence from flesh on moral grounds and to publish items of interest solely to its vegetarian subscribers, but it also began to target niche genres, publishing a Ladies' Page ("Chit Chat for Ladies"), a supplementary children's magazine (*The Daisy Basket*), and a Christmas Annual (*Almonds and Raisins*, which Lindsay also edited; see figure 6.1). "Chit-Chat for Ladies," as its name implies, participated in the "chatty" genre of the New Journalism, but its conversational dialogues on cooking and entertaining also sought to preserve, within an increasingly anonymous urban environment, the socially embedded, affective, and oral transmission of culinary techniques. The commercialization of journalism in 1880s and 90s, with its appeal to domestic issues and entertainment, represented for many commentators a decline in the standards of serious journalism (Lee 130; Tusan 14). But, as I want to suggest, the domestic departments in the *Dietetic Reformer* challenged the distinction between rational discussion and frivolous chitchat. Incorporating elements of New Journalism and women's magazines, the journal under Lindsay blurred the distinction between a propaganda organ and the commercial press, and it imbued the cultivation of an alternative consumer identity with political significance. Lindsay's exploration of vegetarian cooking made a tactical intervention into late-Victorian biopolitics—an intervention that had implications for both nonhuman and human animals. At a time when the trade in live cattle was developing into a global industry (Perren 1-4), medical science was vivisectioning animals (Showalter 128-43; Elston 277-81), and "therapeutic commodities" were colonizing the female body (Richards 196, 206; Beetham 143), Lindsay took the body—its health and appetites—as a site of resistance to the encroaching control and commodification of life.



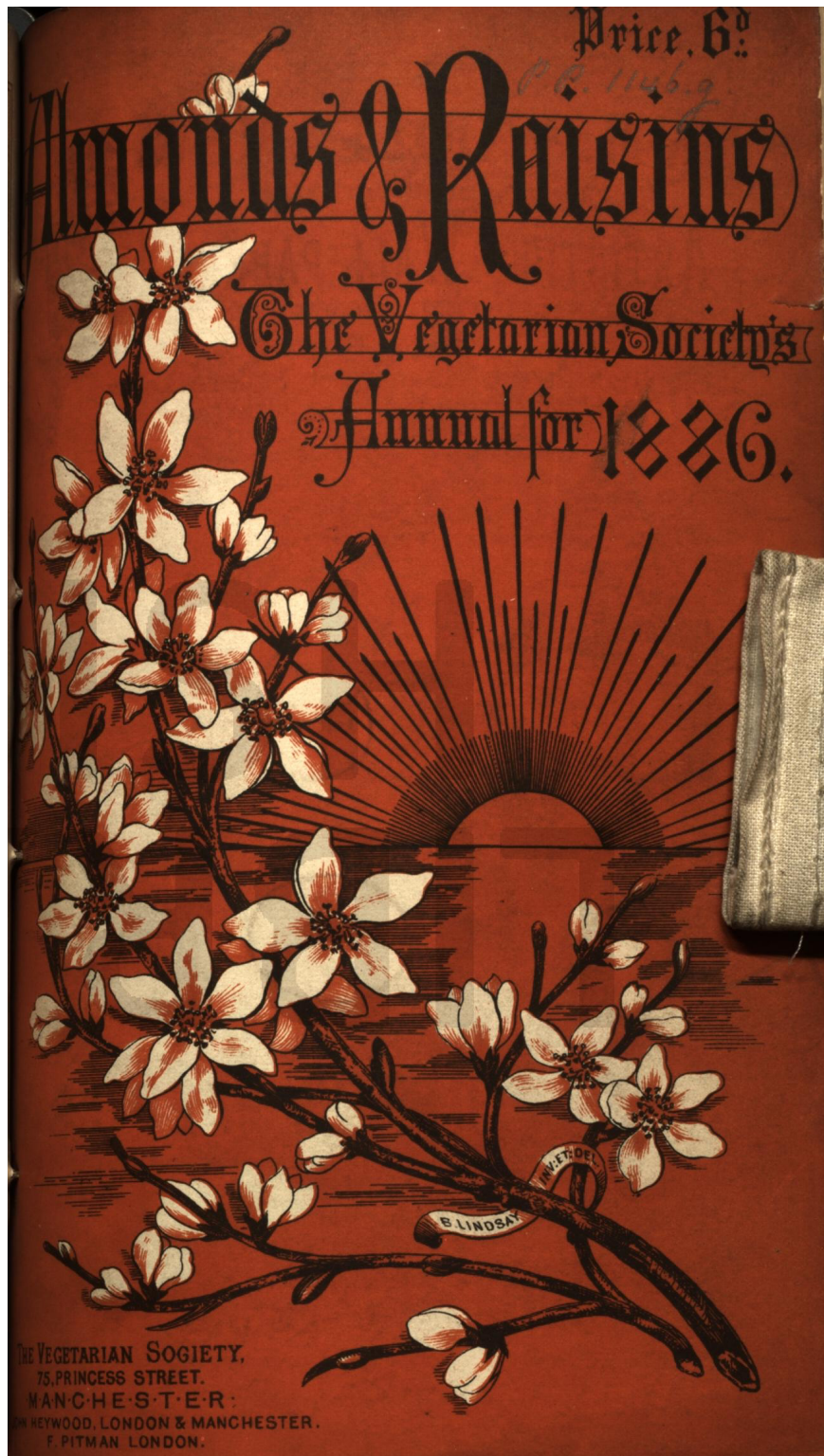


Figure 6.1: Front cover of *Almonds and Raisins*, the VS's Christmas Annual, in 1886. Lindsay's name appears in the illustration. *British Library*.

If one purpose of this chapter is to examine the overlapping commitments of late-nineteenth-century vegetarianism and feminism, I also want to unfold an argument on the importance of print culture in effecting the incorporation of vegetarian commodities within daily life. These two aspects are complementary: new vegetarian foods were a key ingredient in the discussions of the new woman in the press. While cultural anthropologists have documented the importance of cooking and eating as social practices of identification (Douglas, Goody, Levi-Strauss), scholars of the periodical press have demonstrated the press's importance in forging new political identities (Tusan 9; Green 462; DiCenzo, Delap, and Ryan 49). My contention is that Beatrice Lindsay, as a contributing editor to a food reform journal, intertwined reading and eating in the creation of a vegetarian identity that was based not on moral purity but on the exploration of new consumption practices. In the late nineteenth century, after Newman's reforms to membership had liberalized the VS, vegetarianism spread through popular restaurants and the commercial press, which increasingly reported on domestic issues and lifestyle trends. I claim that we cannot read the emerging content of late nineteenth-century vegetarianism separate from the medium that allowed it to develop. Rather than interpret Lindsay's columns in isolation, I attend to how the form, periodicity, and paratextual advertising of vegetarian journals were all integral to the development of a vegetarian commodity culture and lifestyle that increasingly appealed to and addressed women. The adoption of a vegetarian diet entailed, as the Honourable Mrs Bruce put it, "a radical change in life" (*VM*, March 1893, 88) that disrupted domestic economy and alienated one from the conventions of society. The form of the periodical worked to familiarize this unfamiliar change in life. The periodical's characteristic negotiation between novelty and familiarity, difference and repetition (Beetham, Mussell), informed Lindsay's representation of vegetarian practice and helped embed it within everyday life. The dynamics of serial publication allowed Lindsay to situate the strangeness of consuming foreign foods within a recognizable

structure. Lindsay and her readers made use of the rhythms of the press and an expanding market of commodities to give shape and coherence to an emerging lifestyle of vegetarianism.

***Intermezzo: A Brief History of Mid-Nineteenth-Century Vegetarian Cookbooks, or eating by the numbers.***

Before analyzing Lindsay's contributions to, and interventions in, the vegetarian press, I believe it would be useful to provide some history and background on nineteenth-century vegetarian cookery. When the VS embarked upon its project of food reform in 1847, the genre of the commercial cookbook was not yet available to it as a potential tool for its propaganda. Elizabeth Driver, for instance, begins her *Bibliography of Cookery Books Published in England* in 1875 because, as she argues, it was not until this year that "the form of the modern cookery book was set and its contents roughly hewn" (18). Books of "receipts"—a term which could refer to both culinary and medicinal preparations (Goody 87-88)—of course preexisted, and led to the development of, the nineteenth-century cookbook. Sandra Sherman, in the *Invention of the Modern Cookbook*, details its emergence from eighteenth-century household books. These earlier collections not only contained instructions for the preparation of food, but also included sections on medicine, laundry, gardening, apiary, and brewing, as well as directions for raising, slaughtering, and preserving animals (Sherman 5; Attar 11). They assumed a rural audience of women who made (or who had servants to make) their own household goods. By 1800 a gradual shift began toward greater specialization and a more comprehensive treatment, ultimately giving rise to cookbooks with an urban middle class audience (Attar 11). As Attar argues, Isabella Beeton's *Book of Household Management* (1861)—which, Attar claims, is primarily a cookery book despite its title—exemplifies the nineteenth-century development from the "earlier piecemeal approach" to the "systematic elaboration of rules and routines that governed the daily lives of middle-class women" (12). Building on Attar's work, Margaret Beetham argues that Isabella Beeton codified the pre-

existing body of domestic knowledge, establishing the cookbook's formal characteristics and its central position in the print industry (Beetham 19-20). Beetham also corroborates Driver's periodization, arguing that the years 1860 to 1900 were crucial to the standardization of the cookbook (16). Hence, the modern cookbook and the vegetarian movement developed in tandem: the first vegetarian cookbooks were among the first commercial cookbooks as such. Vegetarian cookery developed as the mirror image, or parodic imitation, of conventional cookery.

Cookbooks as a genre produce repetitive reading practices by making the consultation of print a necessary and habitual feature of everyday life. One does not read a cookbook cover to cover and then return it to the shelf; rather, its recipes ask to be re-visited regularly for the on-going management of the house. As such the genre provided a significant resource for gradually converting and educating others in the practice of vegetarianism. The VS envisioned its cookbooks and recipes as an effective means to circulate and define a standardized and reproducible vegetarian practice, a new way of print-based and plant-based eating that could resist and transcend immediate social influences and traditions.

Though vegetarian cookbooks have not attracted much scholarly attention, one common-sense assumption is that they served as programmatic guides for beginners. For instance, Driver, in her *Bibliography*, documents over seventy-five vegetarian cookbooks for this period, and she argues that they "offered practical guidance to those concerned with the health and moral issues addressed by the vegetarian movement" (27). However, vegetarian cookbooks were not simply the practical supplements to the movement's moral theory. Rather, they were integral to shaping the meaning and representation of vegetarianism. Vegetarianism was a novel and emerging concept at the mid-century, misunderstood and ridiculed by the public press. "Stark nonsense from beginning to end" was how one reviewer reacted to the *Vegetarian Messenger* (*English Review*, March 1850, 225). The genre of the cookery book offered the VS a print model to regulate the

meaning of its diet, guarding it against misrepresentation. The “complete system of Vegetarian cookery” (*VM: Vol. 3*, 1851, 55) encompassed more than just the preparation of food; it prescribed the management of the time, space, and resources of the home. Through the circulation of rationalized cookbooks, the VS attempted to disseminate a transposable, replicable, and credible version of its practice, one that could be learned and followed methodically. Vegetarian cookbooks were not simply “how-to” guides for the “Vegetarian system.” Rather, like the VS’s statistics, they aimed to represent “the vegetarian System” *as a system*. They participated in the rhetorical battle to control the meaning of vegetarianism and govern the lives of vegetarians.

At stake in early vegetarian cookbooks was the ability to cultivate what Sherman terms “culinary authority” (1). In the history of cooking instruction, the “quantum leap into print” (Sherman 5) brought as many problems as solutions; it introduced distance and anonymity in place of the immediacy of face-to-face instruction. As a result, early commercial cookbooks needed to gain acceptance from women who were accustomed to using their own “personalized domestic manuscripts” (1). Mediated through print rather than the intimacy of familial relations, vegetarian cookbooks were aware that they had to earn the confidence of female readers. The introduction to the *Penny Vegetarian Cookery* (1849), for instance, advertised the authority of its anonymous author, stressing that its recipes were “furnished by a lady in whose experience, judgement and skill, we have reason to place the greatest confidence” (4). However, where the commercial cookbooks studied by Sherman needed to establish “culinary authority” simply for themselves, early vegetarian cookbooks had to legitimate the broader category and concept of vegetarianism, a method of preparing and cooking food that many women would have found alien and, perhaps, ridiculous.

The first definitive vegetarian cookbook, according to William Axon, was *Vegetable Cookery* by Martha Brotherton, the wife of Joseph Brotherton (*VM*, June 1893, 217). It appeared in 1812,

well before Driver's date of 1875, but it was not a commercial cookbook. Mrs Brotherton collected the recipes from her fellow members of the Bible Christian Church, and printed them "for immediate use among the congregation," as the *Dietetic Reformer* noted in a retrospective essay (*DR*, Jan 1885, 2). It therefore addressed a limited audience: a small religious sect in Manchester. Over the years, however, it went through multiple editions, each attempting to expand its readership. The fourth edition, published in 1833, came with an introduction by Joseph Brotherton in which he advocated total abstinence from flesh and alcohol (figure 6.2). In 1852, the president of the VS, James Simpson, completely reorganised Mrs Brotherton's text, publishing it under a new title, *Vegetarian Cookery, by a Lady* (figure 6.3), which reflected the appearance of the VS and its embrace of the term, *vegetarian*. While Mrs Brotherton remained anonymous (known as *a Lady*), Simpson's name appeared on the title page, reinforcing the division between the men who publicly advocated the principles and the women who privately managed the practice.

In his updated version, Simpson gave the text a more systematic presentation: he created a new index, developed numerically arranged menus, created a three-tiered plan for converting to vegetarianism, and rationalized the recipes. Take, for instance, the soups. Simpson's edition, like earlier editions, began with soup, mimicking the conventional order of courses in a meal, but Simpson alphabetized the recipes in this section: Almond Soup was the first recipe in his 1852 text, whereas the 1833 version began with Pea Soup (figure 6.4). We also find that Simpson restructured the recipes' appearance on the page. Whereas earlier recipes narrated what to do and what to use in one paragraph, Simpson created subheadings that divided the *ingredients* from *instructions* (figure 6.5), making the recipes much more "functional" and "fragmentary"—two terms I adopt from Mike Ebster's reading of railway timetables (160). With the separation of *instructions* from *ingredients*, *Vegetarian Cookery* invited fragmentary, functional, and *faster* reading, accelerating the text's consumption: without having to sift through a paragraph and parse out

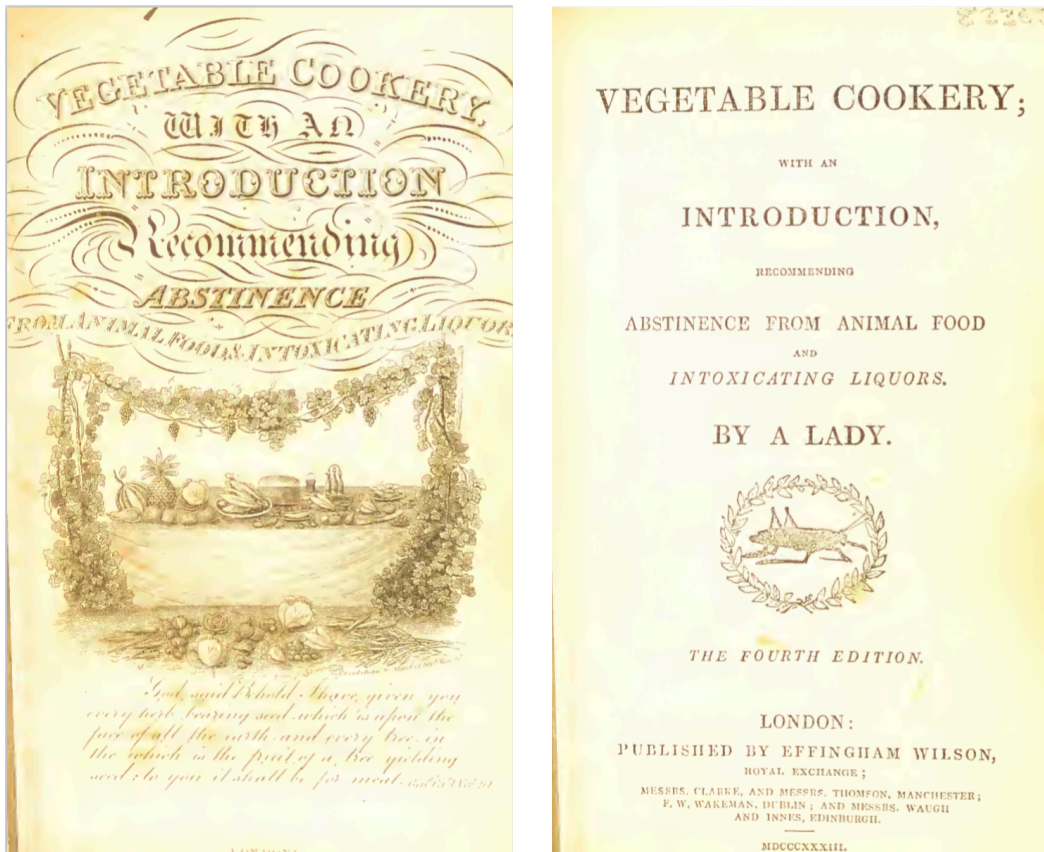


Figure 6.2: *Vegetable Cookery, By a Lady*, Fourth Edition (1833). *The Internet Archive*.

ingredients, readers could now look at the recipe on the page and readily assimilate the discrete pieces of information that they needed. The tone of Simpson’s instructions also changed, becoming terser, while the measurements became more exact: Simpson specified the weight of each ingredient. His recipes called for ounces, pints, and tablespoons, whereas earlier recipe tended to leave some proportions up to readers, telling them to add “a little celery” or “a few peppercorns” (as in the Pea Soup recipe below). Measuring by weight was not essential, Simpson conceded in a footnote, but “should be resorted to wherever it is possible” (58). Significantly, this quantifying impulse translated vegetarianism into the language of numbers, teaching readers not only to practice the diet, but, more generally, to calculate their consumption habits; it represented vegetarianism through what Goddu, in her reading of numeracy in almanacs, calls the “habits and

values of market society” (133). Simpson’s exact measurements, precise instructions, and rationalized layout served to make the recipes, in Ebster’s terms, more “functional” (160), systematizing vegetarian practice, but the effect was also discursive and rhetorical, serving to represent vegetarianism as a modernized, scientific body of knowledge, one that was compatible with the authoritative discourse of information and the marketplace.

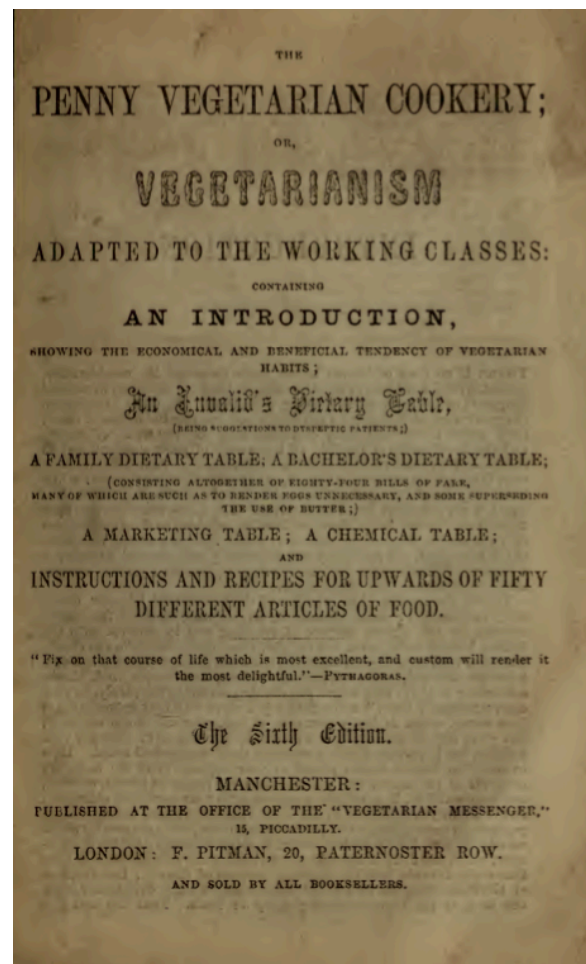
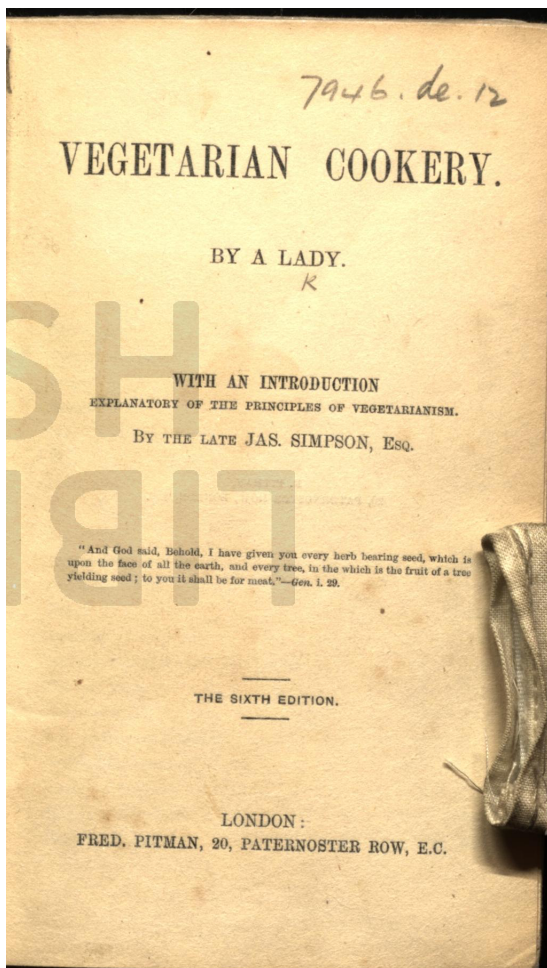


Figure 6.3: Front covers of *Vegetarian Cookery, By a Lady*, Sixth Edition (*The British Library*), and the *Penny Vegetarian Cookery*, Sixth Edition (*The Internet Archive*).



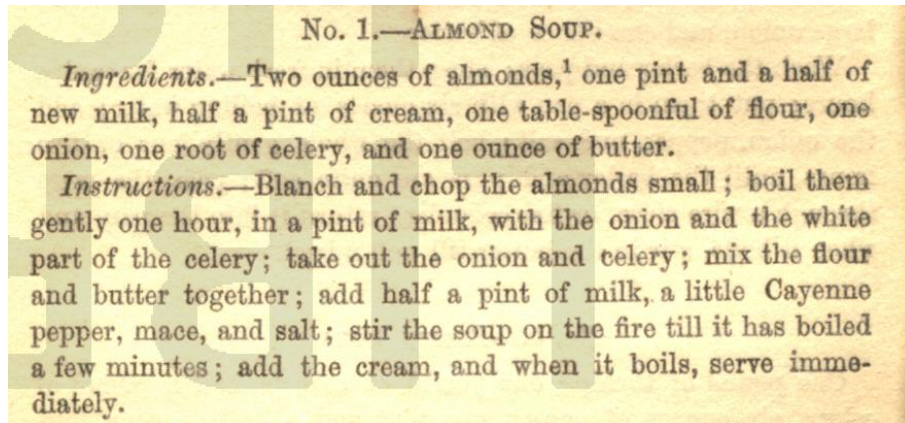


Figure 6.4: “Almond Soup,” *Vegetarian Cookery* (1852). British Library.

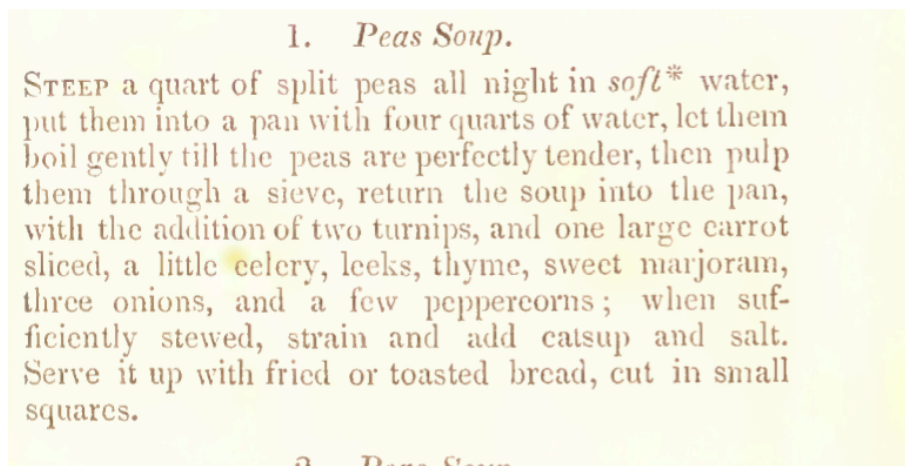


Figure 6.5: “Pea Soup” from *Vegetable Cookery* (1833). Archive.org

Simpson’s edition also gave Mrs Brotherton’s community cookbook a propagandistic orientation, shifting its audience from a small religious sect to the broader public. Simpson claimed that this new audience necessitated a thorough defence of the regimen to counter “popular objections to the system” (2). Hence, to complement his rationalization of the cookbook, Simpson contributed a forty-three page “Introduction Explanatory of the Principles of Vegetarianism,” in which he articulated “some of the leading facts and arguments of the Vegetarian system of diet” (1). As he lamented, whenever vegetarianism was “first presented to the attention of the flesh-consuming community” it was often deemed “unworthy of serious attention” (3). The order of the book—a dry, scholarly introduction followed by the recipes—

suggests a privileging of theoretical knowledge over practical knowledge. Like the recipes' use of exact measurements, the introduction, particularly its use of footnotes, statistics, and chemical tables, aimed to legitimate "the Vegetarian system" by presenting it not as a domestic matter, but as a serious subject worthy of attention and scientific analysis.

In a review of Simpson's edition of *Vegetarian Cookery*, the *Vegetarian Messenger* praised the book's "greatly improved form," and it enjoined its "fair readers" to "submit" themselves to the guidance of the book's printed instructions rather than follow their own inclinations:

The recipes are clear, and present, in a concise and much improved style, the important instructions to be conveyed; and we only wish our fair readers, in putting this valuable book to the test of experience, may submit themselves fairly to be guided by its instructions, in implicit reliance upon the value of its recipes. (*VM*, Vol. 3, 55)

Simpson was president of the VS and owner of the *Vegetarian Messenger*. We would expect the journal to celebrate his edition of *Vegetarian Cookery* as "clear," "concise" and "improved" (55). However, the *Vegetarian Messenger's* framing of the cookbook also reveals the investments and anxieties of the early vegetarian movement. Recipes tend to speak in the imperative, telling readers what to do and how to do it, but by specifically asking "our fair readers" to "submit" themselves to the commands of the text, the review in the *Vegetarian Messenger* aimed to promote standardization and unity: the exact measurements, instructions, and menu plans ensured that different readers in variable circumstances would, according to the review, produce "in all circumstances, the same satisfactory result" (55). This element of sameness and replication is part of "the narrative structure" of the recipe genre, argues Andrea Newlyn: it "enables readers (housekeepers) to recreate the events—ingredients, amounts, results—that produced and formed the original text" (44). Such repetition was critical to the project of food reform; it made possible a modular practice of the vegetarian regimen. Its early cookbooks allowed the VS to disseminate a

repeatable version of its practice, one that could, in Beetham's words, "be systematically taught" (397).

When it came to promoting their systematized diet, the VS promised that it would provide women with the routines to organize their workloads and manage their reliance on the market economy. Cookbooks were themselves commodities—Beetham, for example, argues that "the proliferation of cookery books should be set in the context of a general expansion of the market for household goods" (22)—but they also gave advice on how to navigate the world of commodities. For instance, the *Penny Vegetarian Cookery*, which repackaged many of the recipes from *Vegetarian Cookery* in a cheaper format, gave instructions to readers on how to live frugally, adopting the rhetoric of domesticity to appeal to women who were concerned with the financial pressures of household management. Like much domestic literature in the mid nineteenth century, the *Penny Vegetarian* attributed "powerful influence" (2) to women's labour, but it did so strategically to elevate the status of vegetarianism, offering a vegetable diet as a shrewd economic strategy. Just imagine, it told readers, one could fulfil one's important duties and maintain the family in respectability while also saving on the butcher's bill. Addressing "the mothers, wives, and daughters of the industrious working classes" (1), its introduction emphasized the unceasing regularity of their work:

every day, as sure as the sun makes its appearance in the east, your humble, but important duties commence. How to make the limited means placed at your disposal, meet the necessary demands of the house, and yet maintain the family in health, comfort, and respectability, is a subject which engages your unceasing attention; and to afford you assistance by the light of science, reason, history and experience, in accomplishing this praiseworthy object, is the purpose for which we address you (*Penny Vegetarian* 1).

The *Penny Vegetarian* addressed women not as consumers, but as the managers of consumption, who were responsible for feeding their families and, by extension, the nation (1). The analogy with the rising sun in this passage identifies women with the everyday: like the sun's orbit, their labour is cyclical, constant, and daily (see Felski 79). By evoking this sense of repetition, the *Penny*

*Vegetarian* reinforced its own purpose and the belief that one needed to consult print every day to manage the house. The *Penny Vegetarian Cookery* instructed readers not only on what to eat, when to eat it, and how to prepare it, but also on how to buy it, providing numerically ordered grocery lists, meal plans, and menus for each day. For instance, its “Family Dietary Table” provided a structure for a two-week trial of the diet, mapping out a series of dishes to prepare for each meal of each day (figure 6.6). Breakfast on Sunday of the first week called for recipes 1, 2, 52, 45, and 54, which readers, by consulting the table of contents (figure 6.7) could look up in the book. As I argued in chapter two, the VS’s strategies for the organization of its printed texts—in this case the numerical systematization of its cookbooks, recipes, and dietary tables—reinforced its strategies of self-representation. These dietary tables did not just communicate the vegetarian system; they made it appear systematic, organizing everyday life with numbers.

I. FAMILY DIETARY TABLE, showing the food recommended for each meal during two weeks' trial of Vegetarian Diet. The first week admits the use of eggs and butter; the second week eggs are excluded and a much smaller quantity of butter is used. Previous habits, taste, moral courage, and means at command, must determine which plan to adopt, after a fair trial of both. The Nos. refer to the Nos. of the Recipes and Articles in the book. Changes can frequently be made from the Recipes and Articles not referred to in this table.

	BREAKFAST.		DINNER.		SUPPER.	
	First week.	Second week.	First week.	Second week.	First week.	Second week.
	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.
Sunday . .	1, 2, 52, 53, 54	1, 26, 50, 51, 52	3, 10, 19, 11, 32, 42, 50, 1	4, 9, 21, 11, 34, 44, 1	38, 47, 1, 51, 52	39, 48, 1, 54
Monday . .	1, 26, 50, 51, 52, 53	1, 2, 52, 54	28, 11, 35, 50, 1	29, 33, 50, 1	39, 48, 1, 53, 54	40, 45, 1, 51
Tuesday . .	1, 2, 52, 53, 54	1, 26, 50, 51, 52	8, 25, 34, 50, 1	7, 1, 32, 50	40, 46, 1, 51	38, 47, 1, 51, 52
Wednesday	1, 26, 50, 51, 52, 53	1, 2, 52, 54	18, 25, 1, 36, 42, 50	14, 40, 25, 1, 37	38, 47, 1, 51, 52	39, 48, 1, 54
Thursday . .	1, 2, 52, 53, 54	1, 26, 50, 51, 52	17, 12, 22, 31, 1	3, 13, 22, 25, 1, 36, 43, 50,	39, 48, 1, 53, 54	40, 45, 1, 51
Friday . .	1, 26, 50, 51, 52, 53	1, 2, 52, 54	6, 9, 41, 1, 33	30, 25, 1, 34, 49	40, 45, 1, 51	38, 47, 1, 51, 52
Saturday . .	1, 2, 52, 53, 54	1, 26, 50, 51, 52	29, 37, 1, 49, 38	12, 15, 1, 35, 47	38, 47, 1, 51, 52	39, 48, 1, 54

Figure 6.6: “Family Dietary Table” from the *Penny Vegetarian Cookery*. *The Internet Archive*.

III. TABLE OF CONTENTS, showing the No. and Name of each article referred to in the Dieteries, and the page of the book on which each will be found.

No.	NAME.	Page	No.	NAME.	Page	No.	NAME.	Page	No.	NAME.	Page
1	Bread . . .	9	14	Fried Cauliflower	12	28	Savoury Pie . .	13	41	Brown Sauce .	15
2	Oatmeal Porridge	9	15	Fried Celery . .	12	29	Potato Pie . . .	13	42	Butter Sauce .	15
3	Barley and Bread Soup . . .	10	16	Boiled Beet root .	12	30	Turnip Pie . . .	13	43	Sweet Sauce .	16
4	Peas and Sago Soup	10	17	Fried Beet root	12	31	Fruit Pie . . .	14	44	Apple Sauce .	16
5	Peas and Rice Soup	10	18	Haricot Beans . .	12	32	Plum Pudding . .	14	45	Baked Apples	16
6	Peas and Barley Soup . . .	10	19	Boiled Cauliflowers	12	33	Apple and Bread Pudding . . .	14	46	„ Pears . . .	16
7	Turnip Hash . . .	10	20	„ Parsnips . . .	12	34	Rice Pudding . .	14	47	„ Stewed Prunes	16
8	Hotch Potch . . .	11	21	„ French Beans	12	35	Biscuit Pudding	14	48	„ Rhubarb . . .	16
9	Tapioca Omelet . .	11	22	„ Turnips . . .	12	36	Norfolk Dumplings	14	49	Preserved Fruit	16
10	Baked Bread Omelet	11	23	„ Carrots . . .	12	37	Fruit Pudding . .	15	50	Ripe Fruit . . .	16
11	Roasted Potatoes	11	24	„ Peas . . . . .	12	38	Moulded Rice . .	15	51	Chocolate . . .	16
12	Stewed Potatoes	11	25	„ Potatoes . . .	12	39	„ Sago . . . . .	15	52	Treacle . . . . .	16
13	Stewed Onions . .	12	26	„ Rice . . . . .	13	40	„ Barley . . . . .	15	53	Butter . . . . .	16
			27	Paste for Pies and Puddings . . .	13				54	Milk . . . . .	16

Figure 6.7: “Table of Contents” from the *Penny Vegetarian Cookery*. *The Internet Archive*.

The systematic repeatability promised by a dietary table answered a central problem for the VS: the spectre of failed vegetarians. Because every vegetarian was a statistic in favour of the diet, the VS had to ensure the health and well-being of its members. A failed experiment in vegetarianism, or an unhealthy vegetarian, reflected poorly on the VS’s principles; thus, the organization needed to disseminate precise instructions on dietary self-management, concerning itself directly with the daily reproduction of vegetarian lives. The new vegetarian needed guidance in how to prepare and consume vegetarian food. In the first issue of the *Vegetarian Messenger*, the editors warned that “the new convert to Vegetarian principles” had “to be guarded against what may be termed an injudicious trial of the Vegetarian system: a hasty and extreme adoption of the plainest and coarsest fare” (Sept 1849, 3). The new vegetarian, over- zealously committing him or herself to the practice, could imperil not only his or her own health, but, just as importantly, the reputation of vegetarianism. A failed vegetarian, someone who could not maintain the diet, damaged the image of vegetarianism.

A key difficulty for the VS, one which it attempted to mitigate by adopting the dietary tables and daily meal plans, thus lay in controlling the private iterations of vegetarianism. For this reason, the *Vegetarian Messenger* emphasized print over oral instruction; in an article titled, “What

Shall We Eat?" from 1854, the journal told its readers not to offer inquirers personal advice, but to direct them to printed publications: "it is much the best to refer inquirers to the print publications on the subject of cookery, as much more tangible kind of assistance than any that can be rendered from descriptions of the practice of individuals" (*VM: Vol. 4*, 1853, 15). The journal revisited this point the following year:

in the exceedingly imperfect knowledge of the principles and practice of vegetarian cookery, it is much better to refer inquirers to the printed publications and recipes to be procured, than to prescribe instructions from any system of diet that may happen to be pursued by the individual whose assistance is sought. (*VM: Vol. 5*, 1854, 4).

Here we see the self-conscious attempt to displace oral instruction with print. The journal regarded print as more stable and reliable than the idiosyncratic advice of individuals. Oral knowledge on cookery could differ according to the whims and tastes of the individual; the mechanical reproduction of printed instructions promised to produce the same results wherever they were followed. The VS presumed that print could not change its meaning or message, that it would represent the society's true intentions and system of cookery without variation. However, the "iterability" of print—its ability to be read and repeated in new contexts and in the absence of its author (Derrida 7)—also opened it up to appropriation and different interpretations. Once vegetarian print materials circulated throughout society and found their way into the hands of others, their authors and publishers could no longer determine how they were put to use or understood. Hence, if vegetarian cookery was itself an imitation of the norm, it too was subject to the instability of repetition; the iteration and dissemination of the vegetarian cookery was an inherently unstable process.

Indeed, one never makes the same meal twice; no recipe turns out precisely as it did before, or precisely as its author intended. As Judith Butler argues of gender performance, "reiterations are never simply replicas of the same" (226). While the mid-century VS feared the

instability of repetition, I want to suggest, in what follows of this chapter, that iteration was not only necessary but also vital for the vegetarian movement. In disseminating vegetarianism, the VS had to relinquish control over the meaning and practice of its own movement, a fact that Francis Newman came to recognize but so too did Beatrice Lindsay. When Lindsay joined the VS in the 1880s, women were no longer simply the audience for, but also the authors of, vegetarian propaganda. As I argue, Lindsay mobilized repetition and the periodical format to invite her readers into the authorship and creation of vegetarianism. Rather than present readers with “the complete system of Vegetarian cookery” (*VM: Vol. 3*, 55), she emphasized incompleteness, presenting the vegetarian lifestyle as a personal, ongoing process of experimentation rather than a rigid routine of household management. Instead of telling readers what to eat and how to prepare it, she involved them in a dialogue, demonstrating for us how print culture continually shaped and produced new communities of taste.

### **Our Cause**

In the late-nineteenth century, women began to claim the vegetarian movement as their own. Only women, it was argued, could ensure that the practice of vegetarianism became an actuality, but vegetarianism also allowed women to take on leadership positions in the public sphere and re-define themselves. Denied access to political power, women found in the vegetarian movement a field of agency that allowed them to reconcile traditional gender roles with their new demands for a voice in the public sphere. For instance, at the Annual Meeting of the VS in 1893, Mrs. Wokes of Liverpool, who took the platform just before Lindsay, argued that “Vegetarianism was essentially a woman’s question” (*VM*, Nov. 1893, 414). Women were, she claimed, “more easily convinced than the gentlemen” (414), and she “called upon the ladies to take a greater interest in the Vegetarian cause” (414). Women such as Mrs. Wokes appropriated vegetarianism as a woman’s cause, a cause capable of being undertaken only by women. As Michelle Tusan notes,

feminist journals of the 1890s, such as *Shafts* and the *Woman's Herald*, often legitimated their interest in political issues by presenting it as an extension of domestic duties: the New Woman was presented as the truly womanly woman (130-33). The VS, because of its dual emphasis on domestic and national food reform, provided progressive women with a platform to experiment with new political identities, identities that could still be seen as congruous with traditional feminine attributes. A female vegetarian advocate could be both womanly and political, exercising her domestic knowledge while also participating in debates on the national economy, public health, and animals' rights. Food reform made women essential actors in the public campaign to reform the nation by improving its diet. As I will discuss, Beatrice Lindsay enacted and produced forms of agency in order to situate vegetarianism within nineteenth-century feminist conversations over independence, rights, and humanity.

Michelle Tusan argues that the reconciliation between the political and the domestic became a specific tactic of feminists in the 1890s who, in order to combat the negative caricatures of the “manly” New Woman, legitimated their interest in social justice by drawing upon traditional tropes of womanliness.<sup>64</sup> As an example of this rhetorical move, Tusan cites an article by Austin May on “Womanly Women” in the *Woman's Herald*, a journal with which Lindsay frequently corresponded when it was known as the *Women's Penny Paper*. May, confronting the rigid ideology of separate spheres, represented the claims of women for a greater role in government by presenting them as an extension of, rather than break from, conventional domestic duties. The “new woman” was in fact more “womanly” than her predecessors:

a truer type of woman is springing up in our midst, combining the ‘sweet domestic grace’ of bygone days with a wide-minded interest in things outside her own circle, extending her womanly influence to the world [...] Fifty years ago the world demanded such a woman as then busied herself in the still-room, and pricked her walnuts ere she consigned them to

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<sup>64</sup> Elston makes a similar argument on the anti-vivisection movement: to justify their public campaign, women represented it as a part of their traditional philanthropic duties to “help the helpless” (272).



the vinegar bottle, unmindful of the cry of the world's want outside her sheltered home. To-day the world demands a woman of a different type. (*Woman's Herald*, 15 June 1893, 268)

May here argues that the mid-Victorian ideology of the “sheltered home”—a space separated from work and politics—had become solipsistic and anachronistic. New Women were not demanding a new position for themselves; rather, the world of “today” made this demand of them. The VS provided very concrete instances of how women could combine “domestic graces” (268) with a wide-minded interest in the world: through practical demonstrations and classes of cookery, penny dinners for the poor, and lectures on health, vegetarian women entered the public sphere. The alignment of cooking with social reform allowed women to negotiate the transition from private to public spheres and to express an interest in politics that was seen as congruous with their traditional responsibilities as managers of health and home. Anna Kingsford, for instance, commanded large audiences for her lectures on the civilizing effects of a humane and pure diet. However, I want to note that vegetarian tactics also differed from the common repertoire for extending “womanly influence” to the public sphere. For vegetarians, the “sheltered home” and the activity of the “still-room” were always-already political; they just had not been adequately acknowledged as such. Food reformers such as Kingsford and Chandos Leigh Hunt Wallace attributed the modern diseases of civilization to the dietary causes. The consequences of meat consumption—on the health, morality, and economy of the people—meant that it was inextricably linked to wider implications, even though these implications (the cruelty of breeding and slaughtering animals) remained concealed beneath a veneer of social custom. Hence, the objective of vegetarian advocates was not only to extend “womanly influence” into politics, but to bring politics into the kitchen and construct an ethically informed practice of everyday vegetarian life. Preserving walnuts, a traditional yet also vegetarian food, would not, for the VS, have seemed sheltered or “unmindful” of the outside world.

As a result of the vegetarians' interrogation and critique of everyday consumption, women came to occupy an ambiguous position within the vegetarian movement. Women were an important audience for vegetarian propaganda, but were also frequent targets of its criticism. As Anna Kingsford wrote in a letter to Edward Maitland, "I would like to oblige the fine lady to go and cut the throat of the innocent lamb or pretty rabbit she wants to eat for dinner" (Maitland 29). The refined lady, who ordered dinner from her cook without preparing or slaughtering the animal herself, became a symbol of the contradictions of modern civilization. Henry Salt's treatise, *Animals' Rights*, particularly in its chapter on the "Murderous Millinery" of contemporary fashion, contained several criticisms directed towards women. However, criticism of domesticity and self-ornamentation also appeared as a self-critique within the women's movement. In an 1892 review of Henry Salt's *Animals' Rights* in *Shafts*, Edith Ward acknowledged the inconsistency of women who supported the R.S.P.C.A. but wore feathers in their hats. Taking some of Salt's criticisms on board, she posed a question to the readers of *Shafts*: "We have to seriously ask ourselves, what is the attitude of women towards the great questions of breeding and slaughter for food; slaughter for millinery; slaughter for sport; and torture and death for supposed scientific advantages?" (*Shafts*, 19 Nov. 1892, 40). I find the first person plural subject, "we," of this question significant. Ward asks where do *we*, the collective subjective addressed and called into being by *Shafts*, stand in relation to animals' rights, vivisection, and vegetarianism? She also suggests that asking this question is imperative, asserting "we *have to* seriously ask ourselves" (my emphasis). Because vegetarianism infringed upon the territory traditionally ruled by women (the management of food, health, and consumption), and because it appealed to traditionally "feminine" attributes (sympathy and compassion), it demanded attention from women, but it also re-worked these traditional tropes into the exploration of new practices and identities. Ward, addressing women readers of *Shafts*, essentially asks, are "we" vegetarians? When a vegetarian advocate wrote for

*Shafts* or another non-vegetarian journal, she could not assume an audience of vegetarians or a connection between the editorial *we* and a commitment to food reform. Rather, this connection had to be worked for. In her review of Salt, Ward, herself a proponent of animals' rights, argued that "the case of the animal is the case of the woman" (40), trying to connect *Shaft's* campaign for the political rights of women with the cause of animals' rights. Women and animals were not, Ward argued, essentially related, but, within patriarchal power relations, they occupied similar positions: "This similitude of position between women and the lower animals, although vastly different in degree, should ensure from the former the most unflinching and powerful support to all movements for the amelioration of the conditions of animal existence. Is this the case?" (40).<sup>65</sup> The answer to this rhetorical question was no, it was not the case, and Ward's claim—that "the case of the animal is the case of the woman"—was not yet a reality. What she meant to establish was that the case of the animal *ought to be* the case of the woman.

What was at stake in discussions of vegetarianism and animals' rights were thus not simply the lives of animals or the diet of health, but the definition of what a woman ought to be. As Tusan notes, women writers often cited traditional conceptions of "womanliness" to deflect criticism of the "new woman" in the general press, but conventional definitions of femininity and moral influence were often directed at women themselves to enlist their support in the vegetarian movement. It was argued that women, because of their investment in the health, economy, and morality of their families, would necessarily interest themselves in a rational dietary system. In an article published in the *Food Reform Magazine*, "Women as Food Reformers," Mary Dawtrey contested the outdated "notion that ladies are incompetent to think for themselves" (*FRM*, April 1882, 134), and argued that women were rational enough to "think" and "experiment upon" the subject of diet, using their "influence" to advance its progress: "wives and mothers, if so minded,

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<sup>65</sup> Carol Adams cites Ward's review of Salt in her reconstruction of a "feminist-vegetarian" history (168-70).

could be of immense service in spreading this reform” (134-5). However, Dawtrey also identified a field of agency for single women, one that did not derive from their relationship to men as wives and mothers. Pointing out that “thousands of work-girls” in towns struggled to subsist on a meager diet of “white bread and tea, with an occasional scrap of bacon” (135), Dawtrey enjoined female food reformers to educate members of their “own sex” on the economy and health of “whole meal bread, fruit, haricots, vegetable soup and other cheap food” (134). In other words, she identified food reform’s importance to women, not just women’s importance to food reform, and she carved out a form of agency that was not tied to their influence on men: “Here then, is a field for ladies who want useful occupation: a mission of health to the poor and ignorant of our own sex” (135). Food reform was, as Dawtrey puts it, “a field for ladies” that derived from their traditional domestic role but also extended beyond it. Dawtrey’s paper on “Women as Food Reformers” advanced the cause of food reform and women. Addressing itself to women who were not already vegetarians, it wanted women to lend their support to the cause. She concluded her argument by articulating the reasons that food reform appealed to women:

On the ground of humanity then—and women are *credited* with much delicacy of feeling and much compassion with all creatures that suffer pain—on the ground of humanity, I repeat, as well as on the grounds of health, economy, and refinement, this movement commends itself—or should commend itself—to my sex. (*FRM*, April 1882, 136).

Dawtrey’s parenthetical clarification that, on humanitarian grounds, the movement *should* commend itself to members of her sex, is telling: it was a specific tactic of female advocates to address other women and reinforce this sense of obligation (*should*), setting up a connection between femininity and vegetarianism. Being a woman was equated with consumption, but it also implied, *or should imply*, compassion for all suffering creatures; thus, it logically entailed a commitment to refined, humane ways of living and eating. As Ward similarly argued, “Let us, then, be up and doing, for the cause of humanity is *our* cause, and the stain of injustice is doubly

ours if we, as women, do not move foremost in the van of progress towards a newer, more perfect way” (*Shafts*, 19 Nov. 1892, 41). Ward does two things here: she carves out a space for female agency, claiming the cause of humanity as “our cause,” *and* she tries to convince women to join this cause by suggesting that their identity “as women” hinged upon it. The power to realize a humane way of living lay in their hands; thus, if it failed, they were directly, or doubly, responsible.

### **Lindsay in the *Women’s Penny Paper***

In her appeals to other women, Beatrice Lindsay took the approach of framing vegetarianism as a practice of self-transformation rather than a moral injunction. Her attempts to present it as an exercise of self-fashioning come across in her re-articulation of the very concept of moral duty: in a public lecture delivered at Brotherton Hall in Manchester, she presented “the duty of humanity to animals” not as an act of self-renunciation or gender-based imperative, but as an exploration of different and, for her, better pleasures: “Its watchword is not merely ‘thou shalt not,’ but ‘thou shalt’” (“Higher Life” 43). The foundational Christian law—Thou Shalt Not Kill, which nineteenth-century Christian vegetarians extended to all life—here becomes a permissive invitation. Lindsay told her readers, *you shall*. For her, abstinence from flesh was not negative, but productive: it made possible the invention of a new ethics of self-care, and allowed its practitioners to define and create themselves. Vegetarianism, she claimed, reoriented “our position in the universe” vis-à-vis other animals, which allowed vegetarians to “*feel* the multitudinous relations which bind us to other sentient creatures” (“Higher Life” 44, my emphasis). As I want to demonstrate, the cultivation of a moral and affective community, a community that feels and tastes the world differently (Jenkins 508), took place in the pages of the feminist and vegetarian presses.

If vegetarians argued that their diet was supported by modern science, Lindsay also framed the practice of dietetics as a scientific experiment conducted on oneself: in a letter to the

feminist newspaper, the *Woman's Penny Paper*, Lindsay described her conversion to vegetarianism as the result of a long process of self-transformation wrought by practical experimentation:

It is now more than fifteen years since this question first engaged my attention. After several years of experiment, I at last succeeded in making my practice square with my theory, and gave up the use of animal food. There are few steps in life on which one can look back with absolute satisfaction; but this is one of them. (30 Nov., 1889, 67)

As Barbara Green has demonstrated, feminist periodical culture in the late nineteenth century created space for a confessional discourse in which women could voice their “complaints of everyday life” and politicize the private sphere (463). Lindsay here inserts herself into this conversation, using self-disclosure to publicize and cultivate a vegetarian subjectivity. She narrates a process of self-constitution, representing her conversion to vegetarianism as the outcome of a long battle within herself. Her vegetarian identity was an achievement that she arrived at only after years of self-experimentation. What Lindsay elsewhere terms “the discipline of self-denial”—or “the comparatively small self-denial required to give up animal food” (“Higher Life” 43)—represented a re-disciplining of the self, a struggle in which she formed herself into an ethical subject, squaring her practice with her theory. Lindsay, like other nineteenth-century vegetarians, used the act of self-fashioning to manifest a broader critique of society and the treatment of nonhuman animals.

I want to highlight the context of Lindsay’s vegetarian narrative, the *Women's Penny Paper*, which was founded in 1888 as a newspaper oriented toward women readers (Tusan 100). Feminist newspapers and journals of the *fin de siècle* helped women forge new political identities and communities, as Barbara Green and Michelle Tusan have argued. In this case, the feminist press allowed Lindsay’s dietary self-fashioning to become part of a larger conversation and collective moment. The appearance of Lindsay’s vegetarian narrative in the *Women's Penny Paper* alongside other letters on suffrage, equal rights, marriage laws, rational dress, and social reform situated vegetarianism within a conversation on issues that concerned women. Lindsay’s self-disclosure

before the politically-minded audience of the *Women's Penny Paper* focused on cultivating a model of autonomous female agency and subjectivity.

Within this feminist periodical culture, Lindsay's popularization of science to promote vegetarianism complemented and coincided with her attempts to legitimate women's contributions to science. For instance, in another letter to *The Women's Penny Paper* on vegetarianism and anatomy, Lindsay responded to an anti-vegetarian letter by "Hygeia," a frequent correspondent to the *Penny Paper*. Hygeia, who, as her name suggests, often contributed on issues of health, claimed that the arguments in favour of vegetarianism "never seemed to me to be convincing" (*Women's Penny Paper*, 1 Feb. 1890, 175). To call vegetarian dietetics into question, she cited the authority of Dr. Michael Foster, the Cambridge physiologist and vivisector. In his *Textbook of Physiology* (1879), Foster not only instructed students in vivisection, but also criticized vegetarianism: according to Foster, whom Hygeia quoted in her letter, "[t]he strictly Vegetarian diet seems on Physiological grounds inferior to one of a mixed nature" (175). Hygeia's skeptical letter on vegetarianism, and Lindsay's response to it, disclose the presence of an ongoing debate on diet in the *Women's Penny Paper*: indeed, Hygeia was herself responding to a previous letter on vegetarianism by another regular contributor, "Bachelière," who, the previous week, had not only contended that fruit, nuts, and grain were perfect foods, but had also presented vegetarianism as the means to "rescue" women from "degrading" kitchen labour (18 Jan, 1890). Even though Hygeia did not agree with Bachelière's claims, she acknowledged that "the subject" was "one of great importance especially to women" (175).

In her rejoinder to Hygeia, Lindsay's withering treatment of Dr. Foster revealed in how little esteem she held him and his pro-vivisection text. She lamented how, during her Cambridge undergraduate days, she was forced to study "that too, too familiar volume, Dr. Foster's textbook of Physiology" (*Women's Penny Paper*, 22 Feb. 1890, 210), and she questioned the validity of using

Foster as an authority on vegetarianism: “so far as I know he has never made any experiments on vegetarianism himself” (211). Unlike Lindsay, Foster had not devoted fifteen years to the practice of vegetarianism; thus, she dismissed his authority. Against his unsubstantiated remarks, Lindsay claimed we must “put the continually renewed testimony of many who by adoption of a vegetarian diet have found improvement in health, or remedy for disease” (211). Hence, while she presented to readers of the paper her own experiments in diet, she also invited them to take it on themselves: “[t]he fact is, every individual vegetarian is an independent experiment in physiology” (210). Vegetarians, Lindsay suggested, were not passive consumers of food or science, but were independent producers of knowledge on physiology. Like earlier male advocates (discussed in chapter three), Lindsay appealed to self-experimentation to prove vegetarianism’s effects, but in the context of her dispute with Dr. Foster in the *Women’s Penny Paper*, her claims for autonomous vegetarian agency also take on feminist and strategic significance. Lindsay and other women vegetarians represented themselves as the managers of their own health, who together constituted a collective body of evidence to challenge masculine authority and medical orthodoxy on animal protein. By conducting their lives as independent experiments, vegetarians not only contributed to the movement, but also used vegetarian dietetics to transform themselves and, as Foucault might say, shape their lives into an oeuvre (*Use of Pleasure* 10).

To develop this argument on Lindsay’s vegetarianism as an exploratory practice of the self, I will turn toward one particular message within the *Vegetarian Messenger*. In the issues I have examined from the early 1890s, Lindsay, in addition to her position as editor, contributed a column appropriately titled, “New Foods,” in which she took on the role of a vegetarian pastor, guiding readers to their food. She displayed her fluency with scientific terminology not to advocate vegetarian principles, but to make the dietary experiment practicable for her readers. Lindsay’s column did not address outsiders who needed convincing, but those who, while partially



convinced of vegetarianism's ethical demands, still needed help with the practice. Writing in "the date-stamped" periodical (Beetham 21), Lindsay addressed herself to the present and to those struggling with the daily routine of living and cooking as a vegetarian. Each month, in the same familiar tone, she introduced her readers to a list of the latest "New Foods" on the market. Articles that we now recognize as common staples of grocery stores, such as cashews, dried coconut, yams, Italian risotto, bananas, limes, and pine nuts, reflected the expansion of the global trade in food, but also helped push the vegetarian dietary beyond its starchy monotony. As she lamented to her readers, "bread and potatoes are often the only things a Vegetarian can get at a non-Vegetarian table" (*VM*, Sept 1891, 12), and thus she liked to "experiment" with "a change at home" (13), trying out different foods "to take the place of bread as the chief constituent of a meal" (13). Her column, like the consumer society it hoped to transform, emphasized variety and novelty, while her dietary experiments opened up a channel of communication between the private space of her home and that of her readers. She shared her personal experiences with new products, but she also invited readers to experiment in their kitchens and report back on their gastronomic successes, turning readers into contributors. She addressed, but also helped call into being, a community of readers and eaters.

### **New Foods**

Beatrice Lindsay's adherence to vegetarianism derived from humanitarian motives rather than motives of self-interest (hygiene, health, or economy), but in the 1890s she perceived what she described at the 1891 Annual Meeting as "a great change in matters relating to cookery" (*VM*, Nov. 1891, 321), a change that demanded a corresponding shift in tactics from polemical arguments to the art of cookery. Vegetarians now had some common ground with their enemies, and the world was much more hospitable to vegetarians. The "solid joint" of previous decades, which had formed the centerpiece of mid-Victorian tables, was, Lindsay claimed, "no longer a

necessity at respectable dinner parties” (Nov. 1891, 321), and “when you were invited to dinner, there was even a chance of getting something Vegetarian to eat” (321). Even the 1888 edition of Mrs. Beeton’s *Book of Household Management* contained a new chapter on vegetarian recipes, while in 1891 the popular publisher, Cassell, released *Cassell’s Vegetarian Cookery*. Reflecting on the position of the vegetarian movement in the 1890s, Lindsay argued that, while much had been achieved “in the battering ram fashion” of outspoken advocacy, now was the time for “the silent process of growth” (*VM*, Nov. 1893, 415). Proceeding in the spirit of friendship and moderation, rather than the “advocacy of extreme doctrines” (415), would, Lindsay believed, gain greater favour with public opinion. In the 1890s, the “world [was] acquainted with the principles and practice of Vegetarianism,” and “therefore Vegetarians may now tone down their style of talking, for we have not now, as was the case forty years ago, to dispute with enemies but with half-convinced friends, who would like to become vegetarian, only they think it so difficult” (415). While many of these “half-won converts,” some of whom may have been associates in the VS, were receptive to vegetarian ideas, they lacked the practical knowledge to conduct it in the home. Hence, Lindsay argued that “[g]ood cookery is the best means for popularizing the Vegetarian diet. It is all very well to give 24 reasons for being a Vegetarian, but people will not adopt the better diet if they are not taught how to cook a Vegetarian meal properly” (*VM*, Nov. 1891, 321). Providing a litany of arguments based on chemistry, natural history, economics, physiology, anatomy, and hygiene had become a well-trodden genre within vegetarian advocacy (the VS did indeed publish a halfpenny pamphlet titled “24 Reasons for a Vegetarian Diet”), but Lindsay recognized that reasons for being a vegetarian would not teach anyone how to live as a vegetarian. Now was not the time for combative arguments, but gentle guidance. Rather than assert the moral reasons behind her diet, Lindsay’s emphasis on good cookery addressed the quiet, unheralded transmission of culture practices. Her column on “New Foods” mobilized the periodical as a

collaborative space for the collective exploration of vegetarian habits. In this way, she invested her readers in the construction of the practice of vegetarianism.

The title of Beatrice Lindsay's column condenses the objectives of the vegetarian movement into a succinct statement: *new foods*. Vegetarian advocates aimed to introduce new foods into daily routines. For the middle and upper classes—that is, for those who could afford meat regularly—conversion to vegetarianism required that one eat differently, relinquishing customary tastes in favour of a dietary regime that was most commonly associated with poverty or eccentricity. From its foundation in 1847, the VS emphasized the benefits of abstinence and simplicity in diet, but the advertising and the commodity culture of the late-nineteenth century were driven by “the quest for superfluous variety” (Loeb 26). We may, then, read the emphasis on novelty in “New Foods” as an attempt to compete with and adapt to late-Victorian consumer culture. As I discussed earlier in this chapter, the VS published works of cookery that appealed to domestic ideals; here, however, I focus not on the way in which women were instructed in vegetarianism, but the way in which they collectively invented it through experimentation. In particular, I address the way in which the *form* of the periodical, rather than simply its content, popularized vegetarianism; as a genre, the periodical specialized in integrating new ideas and unfamiliar content within regular, consumable instalments.

James Mussell argues that, much like scientific experiments, the print forms of the press were designed to assimilate, organize, and make sense of what was new. In Mussell's phrasing, periodicals “cohered knowledge”: they transformed the unfamiliar into the familiar, and gave meaning to the flux of the modern world by organizing it according to a set of repeated generic conventions (“Cohering Knowledge” 93-100). The defining characteristic of the periodical is, therefore, a constant negotiation between novelty and repetition, change and continuity, difference and sameness. While the content of each issue changed, its form remained the same

(Beetham 99). Thus, form, as Mussell argues, provided the framework through which readers understood novel, changing content. The repetition of genres in the press mitigated the force of the unknown by placing it within categories that readers were already familiar with: “in order to make sense of a social world constantly in flux, the new was represented according to generic conventions that related it to the familiar” (Mussell 95). In the case of food reform, Beatrice Lindsay and the VS not only had to create, through the repetition of form, the identity of their journal; rather, they also had to familiarize readers with the novel content of their diet, new vegetarian foods. Vegetarian periodicals and vegetarian practice had the same objective: to introduce new content within recurrent and familiar forms. The *Vegetarian Messenger*, as a serial publication, allowed Lindsay to situate the novelty of vegetarian foods within a repetitive structure, and thereby to mitigate the difficulty of being a vegetarian in the Victorian period.

The great changes in late-Victorian cookery described by Lindsay were partly made possible by the appearance of newly imported goods and commodities, which flooded the marketplace and adorned the covers of the *Vegetarian Messenger*. The practice of vegetarianism entailed navigating and making use of this growing consumer culture for one’s own distinct humanitarian objectives. If we glance at the title page of the *Vegetarian Messenger* from April 1898 (figure 6.8), we can quickly identify several differences between the austere, male-dominated vegetarian world of the mid-century and the vegetarian commodity culture of the 1890s. The *Vegetarian Messenger* is now personified as an angelic female figure who trumpets the vegetable gospel to the world, a neoclassical image that visually associates the *Vegetarian Messenger* with the iconography of the feminist journal *Shafts* (Beaumont 1), but also with the “Grecian figures” of popular advertising at the fin de siècle (Loeb 10). Notably, Cadbury’s Cocoa occupies the position above the masthead, suggesting that vegetarianism was becoming identified with brand name commodities. Before readers could reach the first article listed in the table of contents, they had to

flip through nine more pages of advertisements that specifically addressed a niche market of vegetarian consumers. We encounter Fromm's Extract, Nucoline Pure Vegetable Butter, Falona Health Food, Pure Palm Oil Soaps, and other products that were, as they often claimed, made by and for vegetarians. A world of producers and vendors arose to satisfy and sustain the vegetarian movement and make possible a vegetarian culture. Gendered advertisements for products such as knitting machines, the Queen's Pudding Boiler, vegetable-based soaps, and health foods provide us with a potential resource for reconstructing the magazine's shifting readership.

The gradual decline of the mid-century liberal model of the press—which published parliamentary speeches, leading articles of political commentary, and addressed an audience primarily of men—was no great loss for the VS, the members of which recognized that they could not win converts to their way of life simply through the ideal of the public sphere. The

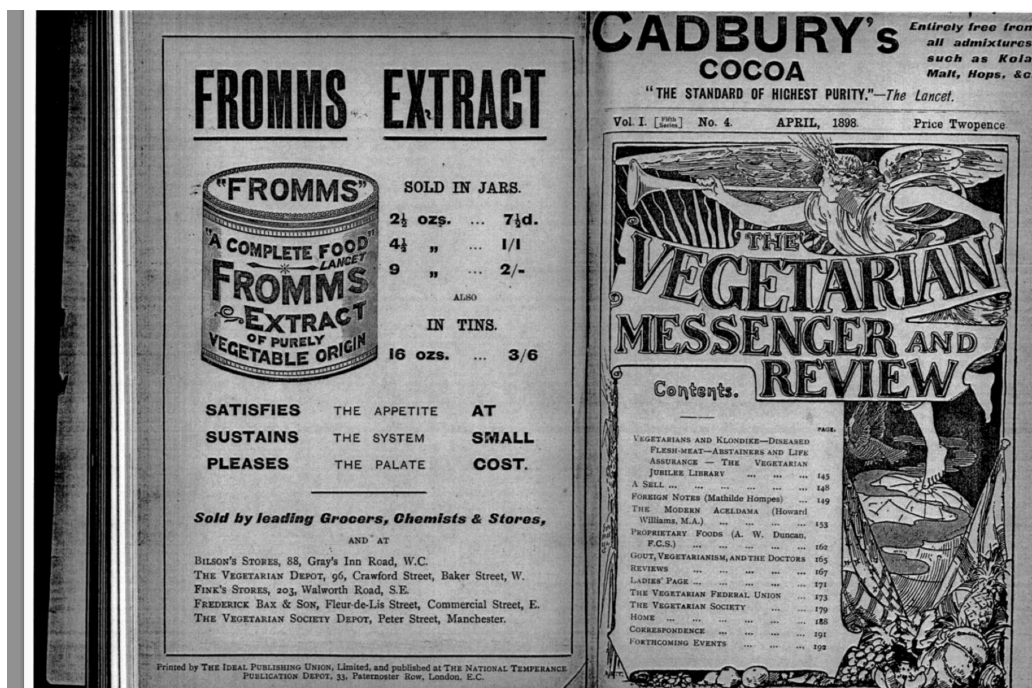


Figure 6.8: The front and back cover of the *Vegetarian Messenger* from April 1898 reveals the commercialization of vegetarianism. *The Vegetarian Society Archives*.

commodification of the press and the expansion of advertising for household goods in the second half of the nineteenth century provided the VS with a wider array of extra-parliamentary avenues for promoting vegetarianism and reaching out to new audiences. The audience that many advertisers wanted to reach, and for which newspapers supposedly sacrificed their political role, was one composed of middleclass women, whom advertisers perceived as “the agents of material acquisition” (Loeb 9). As Margaret Beetham notes, the “commercialization” and “depoliticization” of journalism were held to be synonymous with its “feminization”: the New Journalism of the late nineteenth century appealed to feeling, sensation, and domestic issues rather than the public world of politics (*A Magazine*, 119-22). One can regard this appeal to women readers as “depoliticization,” but, as I want to suggest, the *Vegetarian Messenger*, by borrowing the styles and strategies of commercial journalism, engaged in another form of politics: the politics of everyday life. In constructing a vegetarian way of life, the peripheral pages of advertisements for vegetarian commodities were as important as the more overtly propagandistic and argumentative content of the journal. Advocacy and advertising were complementary rather than antithetical in the VS’s attempts at social reform.

As Laurel Brake laments, well-intentioned attempts to preserve nineteenth-century periodicals in bound volumes often discard their title pages and surrounding advertisements, and this excision redefines the meaning of the text (Brake 29). The practice of reissuing periodicals in bound volumes presents them in the timeless form of a book, and it occludes essential features of periodicals: namely, their serialization, close connection to time, and rootedness in material, popular culture (Beetham, “Genre,” 96). The *Vegetarian Messenger* may not have been a profit-making enterprise, but advertisements still played an integral, rather than a peripheral, role in the periodical. Far from being ephemeral, advertisements for vegetarian products represented one of the most permanent aspects of the issues I have seen from the 1880s and 90s. Advertising

contracts were entered into on a yearly basis, and thus, while the articles and other content changed every month, the advertising remained the same throughout the year. Repeated each month, the images of Nucoline vegetable butter, Nuttose health food, Dr. Nichols' Food of Health, and Vejos vegetable extract composed a recurrent and familiar feature of the periodical's physical identity and appearance, and were thus central to the reader's experience (figures 6.8-12). Advertisements also formed an essential part of periodical's objective: to constitute a community of vegetarians. Under Beatrice Lindsay's editorship, the journal created a dynamic relationship among its recreational, social, commercial, and more overtly humanitarian and propagandistic functions. Pleasure, consumption, identity formation, and ethics all came together in her practice and advocacy of vegetarianism.



Figure 6.8: Advertisements from the *Vegetarian Messenger*, April 1898. *Vegetarian Society Archive*.





**VEGETABLE DRY SOAP.**  
 Pure without any admixture of Animal Matter.  
**SANKEY'S CHUMP DRY SOAP.**  
 Sold in 4 lb. packets at 1d. each, or 2 packets for 1½d.; 3 packets for 2d.  
 (POSTAGE EXTRA).  
 WHOLESALE PRICES, ETC., FROM  
**THE VEGETARIAN SOCIETY, MANCHESTER.**

**SOAP MADE FOR VEGETARIANS BY A VEGETARIAN.**  
 Knowing that Vegetarians have a great objection to Soap made from Animal Fat, I have for some time given special attention to the production of a Soap which I guarantee is made from Palm Oil, and have pleasure in introducing the same.  
**PURE PALM OIL SOAP.**  
 Natural colour. For the skin it has no rival. For the bath it is delightful.  
 Its advantages over Soaps manufactured from Animal Fat are—*Freedom from Blandness, Freedom from any Artificial Colouring, Free from Adulteration, Free from excess of Alkali.*—Being pure, it wears 50% the time of Artificial Soap.  
 In Boxes containing 2 Tablets, price 9d. per box; 10y Post, 1s. per box.  
 For household use is the usual 4lb. bar. Price per cwt. (112 lbs.) 25s. Carriage Paid to any Railway Station.  
**W. G. SMITH, Soap & Candle Manufacturer, KINGSTON-ON-THAMES,**  
 Wholesale Dealers apply for price & terms.  
 May be had from The Vegetarian Society, Manchester.

**R. M. SCOTT'S**  
**"G. B."**  
**WHEATMEAL BISCUITS.**  
 Medal Awarded Universal Cookery and Food Exhibition, London, 1885

THESE BISCUITS are suitable for young and old, the strong or the invalid, and are specially suitable for travellers, as they have stood the test of all climates.  
 They are regularly taken by the "ORIENT LINE" as passenger stores to Australia, and also by their Steamers which make pleasure trips to the Mediterranean Sea and to Norway.  
 They can be obtained of High-class Grocers and London Stores, Vegetarian Restaurants, or at the  
**VEGETARIAN SOCIETY, MANCHESTER.**  
**R. M. SCOTT, Great Barton Mills,**  
**BURY ST. EDMUNDS.**

**TRADERS' LIST**  
 Prices and Particulars of Goods may be had from the Advertiser on application, and is many times from THE VEGETARIAN SOCIETY, MANCHESTER.  
**W. G. SMITH, Kingston-on-Thames.**  
**PURE PALM OIL SOAP.**

**THE VEGETARIAN YEAR BOOK,**  
 PRICE THREEPENCE.  
 The only complete Handbook of and guide to the Vegetarian Movement.

LONDON:  
**The Ideal Publishing Union, Ltd., 33, Paternoster Row, E.C.**

The following Works by the late Dr. ARCHIBALD HUNTER, of Bridge of Allan Hydropathic Establishment, have been very favourably reviewed by the leading papers as the clearest description of Causes and Cure of Diseases by Hydropathy that has been published—

**HYDROPATHY FOR HOME USE.**  
 Should be in every House. THE HEAD: Post Free, Price 6s., nett.

**HEALTH, HAPPINESS, and LONGEVITY.**  
 Its Relation to the Body in Health and Disease. Post Free, 9d. nett.

**HYGIENIC TREATMENT.**  
 For the Preservation of Health and the Cure of Diseases without Medicine; including DR. WILFORD HALL'S Treatise on Colon Flushing, and Ten Specimen Diseases by Mrs. M. DEAN, of Farnham. 4d. nett. 4th Edition, 4s. 6d. nett.  
**BRIDGE OF ALLAN: Mrs. HUNTER, Zetland House,**  
 Also from the VEGETARIAN SOCIETY, MANCHESTER.  
 Post Free, 7s.

**LANCASHIRE STEEL WHEAT MILL,**  
 MANUFACTURED BY  
**REUBEN SUTOLIFE,**  
 of THAMES ST., MANCHESTER.

Is adapted for home use, and is the best before the public for thoroughly making the wheat meal so essential for securing a pure home loaf. Five minutes grinding each day will supply a small family with flour for their bread.  
 Prices: 2½-, 3s., 3½-, 4s., 4½-, and 5s. City Scale, Beam & Coffee Mill Manufacture.  
**THOMAS STREET, MANCHESTER.**  
 London Address: 45, GURTON ST., THAMES ST., E.C.  
 South Street, Bishop's Cleeve.  
 Dear Sir,—I am sorry I did not write to say the Wheat Mill came to hand quite safe. I like it very much and if I can recommend you in any way I shall be pleased to do so. It exceeds my expectations. With thanks for the same, I am, dear sir, yours faithfully,  
 A. W. Wain, Family Grocer.

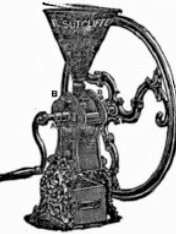


Figure 6.11: Advertisements from the *Vegetarian Messenger*, April 1898. *Vegetarian Society Archive.*

**THE LONDON FOOD CO.**  
 451, HOLLOWAY ROAD, N.  
**Agents for Dr. J. H. Kellogg's Health Foods.**

**CARAMEL - CEREAL.**  
 A wholesome and agreeable substitute for Tea and Coffee. Fragrant. Easily prepared. Enough for 100 cups in every package.  
 Price 10d.

**NUTTOSE.**  
 A simple preparation of the most nutritious nuts, which can be eaten at once, or cooked again. Recipes furnished. Very strengthening, and easily digested.  
 In Sealed Tins.  
 ½-lb. 10d. 1-lb. 1s. 1½-lb. 1s. 8.

**GRANOSE.**  
 The ideal preparation of whole Wheat, preserving all its valuable features in the least objectionable form. Perfectly cooked.  
 Per Package, 7½d.

These Foods can be obtained through all Dealers in Vegetarian Specialities.  
 Send for our Price List of Nut and Cereal Foods.  
**AGENTS WANTED EVERYWHERE.**

DR. NICHOLS' For Breakfast and Supper. Invaluable for indigestion and Constipation.

Quite supersedes Oatmeal as it is much lighter and more easily digested.  
 Where the FOOD OF HEALTH cannot be obtained, it will be sent Carriage Paid, on the following terms—3 lbs. for 8s., 10 lbs. for 25s., 20 lbs. for 45s.

**FRANKS & Co.,**  
 Made with Milk is simply Delicious. 59, Eastcheap, LONDON, E.C.

**MANCHESTER.**  
**VEGETARIAN RESTAURANT,**  
**5, FOUNTAIN STREET,**  
 (Two Doors from Market Street).



**THE VEGETARIAN MESSANGER AND REVIEW.**

**VEGETARIANISM (V. E. M.)**  
 THAT IS, THE PRACTICE OF LIVING ON THE PRODUCTS OF THE VEGETABLE KINGDOM, WITH OR WITHOUT THE ADDITION OF EGGS AND MILK AND ITS PRODUCTS (BUTTER AND CHEESE), TO THE EXCLUSION OF FISH, FLESH, AND FOWL.



"Fix upon that course of life which is best; custom will render it most delightful."

Vol. I. No. 4. APRIL 1st, 1898. PRICE TWOPENCE.  
 (5th Series) 30th Year.

**Vegetarians and Klondike.**—According to our interesting contemporary, *Food, Home and Garden*, a Vegetarian, Mr. J. H. Freeman, has got the gold fever and is on his way to Klondike. Mr. Freeman was born in 1862, and has developed a fine physique by his Vegetarian habits, farming, gardening, and travel afoot and awheel. He has travelled in many of the Western States, and for seven years lived in the State of Washington, where he engaged in farming. His place was twelve miles from Seattle, where on five acres he raised fruit and vegetables continuously without a single failure during the years he lived there. From Seattle he writes on Jan. 28th:—"I do not intend to take one pound of meat of any kind, I intend to take foods that have the most carbon in to produce the heat. By not using meat I wont have to take any scurvy cure with me, which is advertised here as very necessary to include in the outfit for Alaska. The meat-eaters' argument is completely overthrown by the fact that vegetable food contains in the aggregate as much carbon as animal. Indian corn contains a great amount of carbon. Abstract the water from N. O. Molasses and the remainder is carbon. Molasses and Indian

Figures 6.12: Advertisements from the *Vegetarian Messenger*, April 1898. *Vegetarian Society Archive.*

## Serial Eating

*There is certainly great work for some one to do, in teaching the English nation what is good, in new fruits and new vegetables.*

—Francis William Newman, “Lecture on Vegetarianism,” 20 October 1871

In January 1891, Lindsay greeted readers of her “New Foods” column with the “welcome news” that Mr. W.S. Manning of London had “started an agency for fruit, nuts, and other useful vegetarian, (or V.E.M.) foods” (*VM*, Jan. 1891, 12). New foods were newsworthy items for vegetarians, and each month Lindsay kept her readers informed on “the novelties that Mr. Manning is introducing” (Feb. 1891, 62). Mr. Manning was himself a vegetarian advocate, who became active in the 1880s with the London Food Reform Society, organizing cookery demonstrations and educational dinners. In the *Vegetarian Messenger*, his list of “Fruit and Nuts, Fresh or Dried—Foreign or Home Grown—Wholesale or Retail” were called for in recipes sections, recommended in Lindsay’s column, and displayed in its advertising pages, thus creating porous borders between the journal’s paratextual advertisements and internal content, or between its commercial and propagandistic functions. For instance, Lindsay recommended Mr. Manning’s chestnut flour “for use in soups” (Sept 1891, 259), and then referred her readers to “recipes contributed by Madame Risos to the June *Vegetarian Messenger*” (261). Hence, she used the intertextuality and seriality of the periodical to bring together a community of women through the exchange recipes, ingredients, and ideas; readers could follow the recipes of Madame Risos from the June issue but use the products discussed by Lindsay in the September issue, perhaps inventing a new recipe or dish in the process.

The collaborative relationship between Lindsay, the editor, and Manning, the vendor, demonstrates how vegetarians worked to intervene in production and consumption, or in the economic distribution of foods and in their everyday uses. Vegetarian substitution required not only replacing meat with vegetables, but also creating an alternative social and economic order

that could support a vegetarian way of life. Lindsay played the role of mediator within the network of consumers and producers; she tried different products and identified those commodities that bore the most applicability to her readers. She was, we might suggest, a food critic, and yet her role was productive rather than simply descriptive. She received food samples from distributors such as Mr. Manning, and each month in her column on “New Foods” she related her opinions and preferences of these vegetarian specialities, telling readers the costs, quantities, and potential uses of the articles sold by Manning’s and others.

I may name the following items in Mr. Manning’s list: White Grapes (French), at 6d. per lb.; West Indian Limes, at 6s. per doz.; Tasmanian apples, 4d. per lb.; Barbadoes tamarinds, 3d. per lb.; and dried-pine apple, which, to my taste, is much preferable to the favourite crystallised kinds on account of containing only its natural sugar (Sept 1891, 259).

Each newly imported product on the list was accompanied by a description of its price, taste, and potential use in vegetarian households. Lindsay’s interjection of her personal preferences (“to my taste”) added a level of intimacy to what would otherwise be a standard price list. This self-disclosure allowed her to unfold before her readers an authorial persona whom they could learn to trust. She further familiarized readers with the appearances and flavours of exotic products by placing them within recognizable culinary and taxonomic classifications. For instance, readers learned that yams “are very like potatoes only with a slightly sweet flavour” (Feb 1891, 62). And, like potatoes, yams are also easily boiled into a floury substance, but “they are not like the potato, a *tuber*, but a *rhizome*; that is to say, they are not round offshoots born on the root, but are enlarged parts of the root itself” (62). Lindsay used the growing cultural authority of science not to abstract food into its chemical properties or nutrients, but to make unknown foods tangible and concrete. She related the foreign to the domestic; yams fell within the same taxonomic family as “the beautiful bindweed of our English lanes” (62). Readers also learned that cashew nuts were the product of a tree in the American tropics, the fruit of which was “exactly comparable in botanical

structure to the strawberry” (61). In taste they stood between the almond and pistachio. This epistemological work of classification was necessary to enable vegetarian activity: people tend not to eat something if they do not first know what it is. Lindsay made new vegetarian foods comprehensible and, hence, consumable for her readers.

One of the principal tropes Lindsay used to reconcile new foods with her readers’ already-existing culinary knowledge was thus analogy. However, the periodical itself also provided a cultural framework for integrating variety and difference into the lives of readers. Lindsay’s columns emphasized novelty, change, and variation from the monotonous routine of bread and potatoes, but she also drew attention to the serial continuity and repetition of her medium. For instance, she concluded her January column by noting, “[t]he above list of foods is well worth the attention of those who are not yet familiar with the articles I have named, and I shall hope to introduce some others to the notice of my readers next month” (Jan 1891, 13). The work of satisfying the vegetarian body was an open-ended process, an exploration that would continue with next month’s issue. Mr. Manning was, readers learned, “still adding to the variety of his selection of fruits and other Vegetarian foods” (Sept 1891, 259). There would always be a new food to eat just as there would always be a new issue to read. Lindsay thus closely intertwined reading and eating practices, and balanced novelty against formal repetition. Lindsay introduced dietary changes and new foods to her readers, but she did so within the familiar and repetitive form of the monthly magazine. Through her use of established taxonomies and conventional print forms, she gradually gave shape, coherence, and meaning to the changing practice of vegetarianism. Notably, subscribers received their vegetarian journals and their vegetarian foods in the same way: through the post. Manning’s agency, Lindsay claimed, enabled vegetarians living in the country or away from market districts to order fresh or dried fruit at wholesale prices, making fruit “a staple article of food, instead of an expensive luxury, as it used to be a few years ago”

(Sept 1891, 259). Hence, isolated vegetarians could anticipate receiving their monthly magazine and their delivery of sultana raisins, West Indian limes, and dried pineapple in the same manner, making vegetarian texts and foods “staples” of the everyday.

Much like the periodical, the practice of vegetarian cookery itself involved mixing familiarity with novelty. It was process of adapting new content to fit within traditional forms in order to meet the needs of the present. Lindsay frequently represented it as a struggle between inherited social conventions and tactical innovation. In the January 1891 issue, she drew her readers’ attention to “a very satisfactory sample of nut meal” that she had “received from Mr. C Stamper, of Didsbury” (*VM*, Jan 1891, 10). Made from ground hazel nuts, this nut meal could be used in cakes, as one would normally use ground almonds, but Lindsay claimed, “what is more important, it completely solves the problem of what to use as *a strictly vegetarian butter*” (10). Lindsay’s previous attempts to substitute for butter had all ended in failure for different reasons. Following the “recommendation of writers in the old *Dietetic Reformer*” (11), she had tried “mashing pulse with oil,” but this admixture fell short of the mark because it contained too much “starch,” thus rendering it “entirely different in food value from butter” (11).<sup>66</sup> In addition to following recipes such as this one for mashing lentils and other pulses, Lindsay had also experimented with olive oil, but, as she lamented, it was “too ‘messy,’ owing to its liquid form” (10). However, olive oil stirred up with Mr. C. Stamper’s nut meal could be formed into a “paste such as can be spread with a knife” (10). We see here, then, one of the small triumphs that made up the progress of vegetarianism, or what we might call, to borrow one of *Punch*’s puns, the

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<sup>66</sup> For example, the November 1885 issue of the *Dietetic Reformer*, the same issue in which first Lindsay appeared as the Editor of the VS, published a recipe for “Vegetarian Butter” contributed by a correspondent who signed his or her name simply as “C.H.R.”:

Vegetarian Butter. — A cup of lentils steeped till soft, simmer for five minutes, pour out and stand till cold, then add a few fine bread crumbs, and a little grated cheese, pepper, and salt, and grated nutmeg, and put in pot. (*DF*, Nov. 1885, 344).

“spread” of vegetarianism (*Punch*, 24 Nov. 1855, 214). The recipes and recommendations of “writers in the old *Dietetic Reformer*” had been surpassed, and Lindsay had arrived at an adequate equivalent for butter, which she described to her readers in both practical and scientific terms, developing a popular science of vegetarianism: “The oily substance of the nut, distributed in its natural cells, and accompanied by a certain portion of mineral salts, does not present these objections [of previous attempts], and in these respects more nearly resembles ordinary butter” (*VM*, Jan 1891, 11). Lindsay “strongly recommend[ed] those who have experimented on vegetable substitutes for butter to try this mixture” (11). It was, she said, particularly good with jam “in the way in which butter is much enjoyed by children, and usually forbidden by their parents” (11). By identifying with the child’s enjoyment rather than the parents’ discipline, Lindsay seems more concerned with the pursuit of her own pleasure than with domestic duties to care for others. As Lindsay also indicates through her reference to olive oil, finding a butter substitute was a “messy” (10) problem, and her solution suggests *bricolage*, a creative way of using, manipulating, and enjoying the material world (de Certeau xxii). Vegetarianism required tactical and very tactile consumer practices, an ability to appropriate the goods of an expanding commodity culture, and materially re-shape these objects to fit one’s own purposes.

Finding “a strictly vegetarian substitute for butter” was an everyday and seemingly trivial problem for vegetarians. Worrying about what to use for butter did not make front-page news, not even in the *Vegetarian Messenger*, which usually led with an article on the science of diet, a summary of recent events, annual reports and speeches, or an appeal to the reader. Lindsay’s columns appeared near the end of each issue, with the correspondence and recipe pages. They brought together the ephemera of material culture with social reform. Her admixture of hazel nuts did not directly address social progress or the moral status of animals, but it allowed her to reconcile her humanitarian principles with the established conventions of the table. Her

experiments with nut-butter thus reveal for us the importance of what Michel de Certeau terms the activity of “making do” (35) in the vegetarian movement and in the invention of vegetarianism. For too long, de Certeau argues, we have assumed that production ends with consumption, and we have thus neglected to study what consumers *do* with the things they buy, or *make* of the images, texts, and discourses they assimilate from popular culture—that is to say, we have failed to acknowledge the subtle ways in which consumers are also producers of meaning. De Certeau argues that statistical studies of consumption—for a nineteenth-century example, we could mention those by Dr. Edward Smith on the English diet (Burnett 128)—record “*what* is used, not the *ways* of using” (35). In *The Practice of Everyday Life*, De Certeau attempts to theorize the unrecognized “*ways* of using,” which he describes as the “creative tricks of the ‘weak’ within the order established by the ‘strong’” (40). Through a variety of “tactics,” users appropriate cultural products according to their own interests, thereby making daily rituals (cooking, walking, reading) sites of contestation: “the tactics of consumption, the ingenious ways in which the weak make use of the strong, lend a political dimension to everyday practices” (xvii).

Vegetarian cooking, in its creation lentil cutlets and vegetable turkeys, made consumption productive; it operated through the citation and imitation of the norm, but also created new uses for foods and products. Lindsay shaped hazel nuts into butter; she gave “messy” vegetarian food a solid form, but, by reproducing the texture, pleasure, and function of butter, she also created something new. Vegetarian cooking and eating relied on imitation as well as artistic trickery and parody. It entailed a negotiation between novelty and familiarity, between modern ethical convictions and past culinary traditions. How could a vegetarian survive the temptations the Christmas season? Lindsay had an answer; she recommended pine nuts, another one of the “novelties introduced by Mr. Manning” (Jan 1891, 12), as “the best substitute for suet in the Christmas pudding” (12). The pine nuts and other “novelties” recommended by Lindsay were

available for anyone to purchase, but these articles developed specific uses and meanings within vegetarian circles and social rituals. Using pine nuts instead of suet allowed Lindsay and her readers to eat within the customs of society, but according to their own humane principles. They operated within the conventional economic and culinary system while also subverting it. Tactical vegetarian eating struck a balance between traditional forms, such as the iconic shape of Christmas pudding, and new commodities. It reproduced established dishes, but, through this repetition, it aimed to make possible a new understanding of the appetites and their attendant pleasures. The vegetarian parody aimed not simply to imitate the meaty original, but also to denaturalize and displace it, revealing its fleshy essence to be non-essential and substitutable.

Lindsay's monthly column was thus oriented toward enabling new vegetarians to survive in a fleshy world and partake in the experiences of modern life. She reveals for us the small innovations that made possible vegetarian ways of living. Nineteenth-century vegetarians were a peripheral minority, a group of eccentric consumers on the margins of a carnivorous culture, but when discussing the tactical ruses of "the weak" over "the strong" we must remember that their "ways of operating" and "making do" were carried out in name of another marginal and increasingly invisible group: animals. In the "New Foods" columns that I have surveyed, Lindsay mentioned the lives of animals only once. She concluded her September 1891 list of new foods by recommending Mr. Manning's excellent coconut oil, at 6d. per pound, for the purpose of frying. "It is very satisfactory," she claimed, "and should be tried by all those wish to minimise the use of animal products" (Sept 1891, 260). She left it open for readers to determine *why* they might "wish to minimize the use of animal products" (260), allowing them to construct their own understanding of vegetarianism. This work of minimization draws attention to the central irony in Lindsay's column: she used the resources of an expanding consumer society—its commercial mediums, advertising, and desire for endless variety—in the name of *minimization*, contradicting



and critiquing the ethos of consumerism, the desire for more. However, the substitution of coconut oil for animal fat was not felt to be diminishment or sacrifice of pleasure, but was carried out in the pursuit of other pleasures. Morality and enjoyment were not at odds in Lindsay's articulation of vegetarianism. Rather, the ethical consumer was in conflict with her surrounding world. Daily existence was figured as both a scientific experiment and a battlefield in which the vegetarian struggled to use the system for her own ends. A provision of bananas, Lindsay advised her readers, would protect the conscientious eater against "a siege, or against—what is almost as bad—a railway journey in the provinces," where only ham sandwiches were served (Feb 1891, 63). New foods were thus part of the tactical battle of "the weak" over "the strong." While situating them within taxonomic categories, Lindsay also positioned foods in relation to concrete situations, such as a railway journey, a day's hike, or Christmas dinner. Her column, "New Foods," suggests that food can be an agent, rather than effect, of social and cultural change, altering the way we behave, act, live, and create meaning. The introduction of new foods into the diets of consumers brings more than variety, but makes possible more humane ways of living. Lindsay presented the exploration and informed use of new foods as a way to operate within and struggle against the existing social order. The invention of everyday vegetarianism was an exploratory, messy, and collaborative process, and Lindsay used the periodical press to give form and legibility to this "invisible" practice.

Notably, Lindsay did not address her readers as the "the mothers, wives, and daughters of the industrious working classes" (*Penny Vegetarian* 1), appealing to the ideal of the domestic woman. Rather, from her tastes and recommendations we can reconstruct a brief glimpse of her life and see how new foods made possible new lifestyles. Whereas much Victorian household literature circumscribed women within the home, presenting an economic system for maintaining the respectability of the family, Lindsay focused on her own personal tastes and appetites, rather

than those of her family, and she seemed to have been interested in foods that enabled mobility, taking her outside of the home. For instance, she introduces dried green beans, one of “the Vegetarian specialties” available from Messrs. Brett and Co., by drawing on readers’ shared experience of urban vegetarian restaurants rather than their experience in the kitchen: “Everybody who has visited the chief Vegetarian restaurants knows the Austrian bean soup” (Sept 1891, 11). We might reasonably infer from this comment that she and her readers were the very type of people who enjoyed dining in public and visiting the chief vegetarian restaurants of London and Manchester. Further, when Lindsay recommends bananas with coffee as “an excellent lunch for purposes of ‘hard reading’” (63), she draws our attention to her “hard”—perhaps connoting masculine—intellectual ambitions rather than her domestic duties. Or when she suggests dried fruit and shelled hazel nuts as a “provision for a journey or a day’s walk” (62), we get the impression that Miss Beatrice Lindsay is cooking for one, or perhaps not even cooking. She appeals to readers’ individual tastes rather than domestic duties, addressing those who visit restaurants and snack on nuts rather than bake wholemeal bread. The very idea of “snacking” seemed to suit the habits of modern vegetarians who, like grazing horses, had to eat frequently but lightly. Indeed, some of the foods Lindsay recommended were oriented toward quick meals rather than home cooking, reflecting the dietary and social changes of the nineteenth century. She began one column by introducing readers to “Rizine,” a packaged and processed form of rice, which, because it had been pre-cooked by steam, “[could] be prepared very quickly. [...] This ought to render it very useful in households where there is little time for cooking” (Feb 1891, 61).

As a citational and reiterative practice, vegetarianism imitated the rules of domestic cookery, but, for its success, it also required its own daily repetition and imitation, and thus, as note earlier, vegetarian cookery was itself subject to the forces of iteration. Readers did not simply read vegetarian periodicals or cookery books; they also tested them out, put them into use, and

incorporated vegetarianism into their own practice. Agency, as Butler argues, is found not in the refusal of repetitive practices, but “within the possibility of a variation on that repetition” (198). Beatrice Lindsay encouraged her readers to take up, cite, repeat, and appropriate the practice of vegetarianism, forging their own agency through the repetitive of acts of cooking and eating. She created agents and practitioners of vegetarianism. The VS had, as noted earlier, published works of cookery well before Lindsay became involved in the dietary reform movement. Her tactical innovation lay in the fact that she took advantage of the participatory, open-ended framework of the periodical, inviting readers to become the co-authors of vegetarianism.

For instance, in her column from September 1891, Lindsay drew her readers’ attention to “a story going the round of the papers lately of a lady who is trying the culture of the common plant called groundsel as a profitable crop” (*VM*, Sept 1891, 259). New foods, apparently, were news not just in the *Vegetarian Messenger*, but throughout “the papers.” Lindsay had previously considered the plant “a very tiresome weed,” but it now seemed as though it might be “eatable as salad” or boiled in the way one cooked spinach. Having never tried it herself, Lindsay asked her readers to investigate: “Will any of our friends give it a trial, and report to me regarding their success?” (259). Lindsay may have addressed readers through the medium of print, but she preserved the oral and communal culture of cooking and eating: she asked her readers to explore the world with their tongues, to eat new things and then report back on their experiences. Lindsay did not diffuse abstract information on the nutrition of the Vegetarian System; instead, she cultivated tastes and ways of “making use,” creating embodied knowledge of the world. Not all the products she recommended were imported commodities; some, like groundsel, were native plants: “Another common weed I have always thought of as a possible subject of experiment—the chickweed” (Sept 1891, 259). The vegetarian diet, as Lindsay presented it, was a continual experiment with one’s local environment and with oneself. Her readers were central to this

process. Lindsay drew upon their experiences to constitute her columns, fusing experiments in eating with monthly periodical reading:

I shall be glad if any of my readers who meet with new or especially excellent food, will send me a small sample, or information as to where the foods in question may be obtained. It will be, of course, understood that I have tried all the different articles which I introduce to my readers; but probably individual tastes differ, and some may not like everything I recommend, while I, on the contrary, may dislike other articles that they might think worthy of notice. But since individual tastes differ, it is always an advantage to become acquainted with as many different varieties of food as possible. (*VM*, Feb. 1891, 63)

Removing the professional anonymity of the editorial voice, Lindsay created a relationship of trust and intimacy with readers: she assured them that every article she recommended she had eaten herself, revealing a glimpse into her private life. Leaving open room for readers to disagree with her recommendations, Lindsay encouraged the creativity and culinary authority of others. Tastes differ, as Lindsay recognized, and rather than seek to dictate the diets of readers, she created a dialogue that, because of the serial form of the periodical, could carry on over several issues, keeping readers interested and engaged in on-going experiments. The ability “to become acquainted with as many different varieties of food as possible” was a privilege and product of the late-Victorian consumer society. But, as I am suggesting, Lindsay used the consumerist desire for novelty to realize her own moral ends. Moving away from the asceticism and thrift of earlier vegetarians, Lindsay and her readers constructed a new understanding of what it meant to be and live as a vegetarian, constituting what Lauren Berlant and Barbara Green discuss as “an intimate public sphere” (Berlant 5; Green 465), a community of strangers mediated by common texts and the consumption of similar things. Together they transformed the negative critique of flesh consumption into a positive technology of self-care, and used themselves as the testing ground to expose the epistemological and moral limitations of their time.

## Conclusion

In the nineteenth century, domestic literature positioned women as the guardians of the health and happiness of the family, a role that came to depend on the purchasing of household commodities, particularly food (Beetham 22). Women were equated with consumption, while men identified themselves with the public world of production. As Mary Poovey has argued, this ideology of gender spheres underwrote Victorian society, but it also developed “unevenly,” becoming a site of contestation. Gender practices were not fixed, but were in constant need of reiteration, exposing them to revision: “the middleclass ideology we most often associate with the Victorian period was both contested and under construction; because it was always in the making, it was always open to revision, dispute, and the emergence of oppositional formulations” (3). Vegetarianism represents one such oppositional formulation that emerged from within the constant making and unmaking of Victorian ideology. While vegetarian texts often appealed to the tropes of domesticity, they did not reproduce them mechanically. Drawing on Judith Butler’s theory of performativity, I have tried to suggest that vegetarian agency accrued by inhabiting the very repetitive social practices and discourses that it opposed (*Gender Trouble* 199). Rather than outright refusing the art of cookery, the vegetarians such as Beatrice Lindsay appropriated domestic genres to destabilize one of the linchpins of middleclass identity: butcher’s meat. Vegetarian cooking did not critique carnivorous middleclass life from a position of exteriority, but from the subject positions enabled by it. Lindsay’s representation of vegetarian tactics was oriented toward integrating the practice within the repetitive work of everyday life. It introduced difference into repetition, producing a parodic imitation of the norm.

If, in conclusion, we read Lindsay’s 1891 columns in relation to the correspondence published in the same issues of the *Vegetarian Messenger*, we can see how the periodical provided the infrastructure for readers, writers, and editors of both genders and from across the country to

share their practical experiences, daily meal plans, and favourite recipes. As Barbara Green argues in relation to feminist periodicals, letters columns “provided room for a discourse of self-disclosure that enabled the production of new subjectivities” (464). The autobiographical discourse in vegetarian periodicals produced new subjectivities that were based upon the communion of food. As I discussed in chapter three, self-disclosure in letters columns allowed individuals to publicize their private trials with the regimen and identify as vegetarians. This strategy continued in the 1890s, but included more women writers. For instance, joining an ongoing conversation, Mrs. Harrison wrote in the January 1891 issue, “I have the pleasure of adding my testimony with that of the others, to the good of Vegetarianism [...] I am willing to correspond with, or send recipes, or visit anyone so desiring it” (Jan. 1891, 21). Similarly, Hanah Thorton, of Chestnut Cottage, Great Haughton, wrote in to “beg to add my testimony to that of Mrs. Ida Devade, 6, Fawcitt Terrace, Southsea, that I have proved Vegetarianism the most healthful way of living” (Jan 1891 26). *I have proved Vegetarianism*: as I have argued throughout this dissertation, vegetarian print media allowed readers to affirm their own agency and identities. By accumulating their testimony together, and by sharing their recipes and regimens, readers such as Hanah Thorton and Ida Devade also lent support to each other and created a community. The periodical format, which invited the engagement and participation of its readers, created a forum in which readers, by contributing to the content of the vegetarian periodical, were also contributing to the creation of themselves and the meaning of vegetarianism. Their narratives of converting to a fleshless diet were acts of self-creation that not only gave substance to the new subjectivity offered in journal’s title, the *Vegetarian*, but also made self-care a political exercise of everyday life.

## 7. Conclusion: A Vegetarian on a Tricycle

This dissertation took as its point of departure Foucault's theory of pastoral power. The pastoral metaphor, the metaphor of a shepherd who feeds his flock, articulates, for Foucault, the objectives of governmentality and biopolitics (the care and control of the population), but, in my introduction, I asked that we take his metaphor literally and consider pastoring, or *feeding*, to be a significant way in which we govern ourselves and are governed by others. Pastoral power, or the power of *feeding the animals*, suggests a material technique for controlling life through diet. It attributes an instrumental purpose to food: one does not fatten the flock for the sake of it, but for a reason—its wool, milk, or meat. This instrumental logic can be applied to human animals too, especially when, under capitalism, the aim is to extract value from their labouring bodies. Diet provides a technique for sculpting the individual body and for regulating the health of population.

In the nineteenth century, the logistics of feeding the population developed into a field of biopolitical calculation (Helstosky 1577-8). The diet of the working classes in particular stimulated anxious debate among modern pastors. As E.F. Williams points out, “by 1850, there were 2.5 million people in London, all of whom had to be fed” (49)—which is not quite the same as saying all of them were fed. Those living and working in urban centres had neither the land nor the time to grow and prepare their own food (Burnett 16). These historical and economic conditions—the factory system and changing schedules of work and rest—disrupted traditional dietary patterns and created the need for quickly prepared and “stimulating” foods, leading to the increased consumption of sugar by the working classes—in sweetened tea, cheap jams, treacle, and biscuits (Mintz 183). Tea, sugar, and white bread, luxuries in the eighteenth century, became staples in the nineteenth. Meat too rose in demand: “Manufacturing, particularly in the heavy industries, demanded energetic flesh-fed men” (Williams 50). A diet of meat was valued for its economic productivity: on the one hand, the meat trade was itself lucrative, but, on the other, meat's

consumption, through the caloric energy it provided, was seen as a boost to the engines of industry.

While I have touched upon the biopolitics of food, my dissertation on nineteenth-century vegetarianism has addressed not the economics of feeding cities and factory workers, but, on a smaller scale, the tactics for conducting conduct. That is, rather than analyse how the population was fed, I have looked at how readers learned to feed themselves, and how, more specifically, serial print media created forms of self-government. Understanding pastoral power literally, I have positioned the VS as a *counter*-pastoral agent, a reform society that wanted to change how people cared for themselves. If, as Foucault argues, the modern state took responsibility for pastoring its subjects, for guiding them to health and happiness, the VS worked through extra-parliamentary means, such as print media, social meetings, and everyday practices, to present a counter-narrative on what constituted well-being. Vegetarians circulated pamphlets, subscribed to journals, gave lectures, wrote letters, exchanged recipes, narrated their lives, and performed their lifestyle all in an effort to lead others to vegetable pastures.

In volume one of the *History of Sexuality*, Foucault reads the regulation of sex through confession as the defining technique of nineteenth-century pastoral power: “According to the new pastoral, sex must not be named imprudently, but its aspects, its correlations, and its effects must be pursued down to their slenderest ramifications” (19). The proliferation of discourse on sexuality has, since the nineteenth century, led us to define ourselves through the interrogation of our desires, or so Foucault argues. However, Chloe Taylor and other food studies scholars have contested this privileging of sexuality, arguing that how and what we eat is equally important to shaping who we are. This argument in fact derives from claims Foucault himself made in volume two of his *History*. Here, in the *Use of Pleasure*, he turned his attention to Greek and Roman ethics, a shift that compelled him to revise the importance he initially attributed to sex. One practice that



Foucault analyzed within classical ethics was dietetics. In order to historicize our preoccupation with sexuality, Foucault emphasized that “the question of foods [...] was a good deal more important than sexual activity” (114) for the Greeks.<sup>67</sup> The proliferation of writing on dietetics in the classical period demonstrated, as Taylor points out, “the contingency of our interest in sex as the locus of self-discovery” (72). Diet for the Greeks was part the aesthetics of existence in which the self was not discovered but created through care of the self (*Use*, 107-08). Motivated by his reading of regimen in antiquity, Foucault enjoined contemporary social movements to reactivate the Greek practice of self-fashioning, arguing that it represented “an urgent, fundamental, and politically indispensable task” (Foucault, *Hermeneutics* 252; Taylor 73).<sup>68</sup>

Following the later Foucault and Chloe Taylor, I have suggested that, within the small community of the VS, diet remained—or was revived as—a significant site of subject formation; vegetarians saw their diet as an act of self-fashioning that not only resisted literal pastoral power (the breeding, fattening, and killing of animals), but also defined them. Vegetarians performed their practice as a marker of identity. Founded in Manchester during industrialization, the vegetarian movement represented its temperate diet as a practice of self-government to resist the excesses of the emerging commodity culture—excesses that were, for vegetarians, symbolized by the demand for flesh. As Henry Salt wrote in his retrospective treatise, *The Logic of Vegetarianism* (1906), “[d]uring the last half century [...] the unhealthy and crowded civilisation of great industrial centres has produced among the urban populations of Europe a craving for flesh food” (14). Vegetarianism, according to Salt, arose as a “modern organized movement” in response to this

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<sup>67</sup> In an interview, Foucault reiterates his point that the importance attributed to food by the Greeks has gradually been displaced by interest in sex: “I think it is very, very interesting to see the move, the very slow move, from the privileging of food, which was overwhelming in Greece, to interest in sex” (*Ethics* 253).

<sup>68</sup> To be clear, Foucault did not recommend resuscitating Greek ethics wholesale. As Paul Veyne points out, Greek ethics were “quite dead” for Foucault, but he did consider “one of its elements, namely the work of the self on the self, to be worthy of reacquiring contemporary meaning” (Veyne 7). For Foucault self-crafting had the potential to open up a critique of modern forms of individuality (“Subject” 785).

“comparatively new demand for flesh” (14). Contemporary historians have, like Salt, continued to interpret nineteenth-century vegetarianism as site of resistance to the expansion of commerce. Neely, for instance, argues that antebellum vegetarianism in the US “combat[ed] the perceived loss of autonomy occasioned by industrial capitalism” (37) by allowing practitioners to control their appetites. However, such an argument, while attentive to the anti-consumerist ideology of (some) vegetarians, fails to consider how the discourse and movement circulated. I have suggested that we also need to attend to the ways in which vegetarianism, despite its distaste for flesh-fuelled industry, embraced the logic of the market: in its use of serialized publications and membership structures, in its imitation of advertisements for quack medicines, and in its incorporation of new foods, the VS was very much a part of the wider nineteenth-century commodity culture. Its numbers, statistics, dietary tables, and personal testimonies relied heavily on representational strategies of the market economy, and offered retrenchment strategies for how one could survive in the “cash-nexus.”

I have described the relationship between the VS and its members as “pastoral” in order to signify, on the one hand, the society’s efforts to shepherd its flock—that is, to unify the community of vegetarians, protect it from external temptations, and guide it throughout its daily life. The word, *pastoral*, evokes the VS’s origins in the Bible Christian Church, a small religious community led by the Rev. William Cowherd. But, on the other hand, *pastoral power* also names the society’s material, worldly objectives: its cultivation the human body through dietary regimen, its husbandry of the self. The VS believed that, by shepherding others to new foods, it could create better subjects and a better society. I have thus described the vegetarian movement as *pastoral* in order to emphasize the significance that the VS attributed to food as a site of subject formation. While the shepherd serves Foucault as a metaphor for governing, I have stressed the literal

meaning of *pastor* (the feeder) to name the way in which vegetarians used their regimen to shape themselves and others morally and physiologically.

We tend not to notice the implications of food and eating because they are submerged in routine. At once biological and cultural, food materializes our bodies, structures our lives, and creates communion (Tompkins 4). Eating differently, however, places one in opposition to the currents of the everyday; it brings discord to the table, that symbol of human harmony.

Vegetarians in the nineteenth century found themselves exiled from everyday life. But, by eating differently, vegetarians also resisted the social forces that discipline subjects into specific habits and affective associations (Taylor 73). As such, I have described the VS as not only pastoral, but *counter-pastoral*. It adopted modern pastoral techniques (such as the confession and statistics), but it guided its flock to an alternative understanding of salvation: not to the industry and power conventionally signified by meat consumption, but to the purity and moral certainty that, they claimed, came with relinquishing it. Indeed, the VS was counter-pastoral because it resisted the underlying premise of pastoral metaphor and of the human subject: that is, the human right to control and consume nonhuman animals.

To revisit Henry Clubb, in a lecture from the *Vegetarian Advocate*, he argued that humans were defined not by their power over other animals, but by the freedom to renounce this very power: “the power of reflection—a sense of justice and mercy” led “man” to study and sympathize with the lives of animals:

Those animals which were strong, sagacious, mild, gentle, and apparently kind to each other, lived on the immediate productions of the earth. The elephant, camel, horse, and ox, were instances of these. While those animals which were thin, excitable, savage, ferocious, and unclean, could only be satisfied with flesh and blood.—(Hear, hear.) Now the lesson thus taught to man, if applied practically to his moral improvement, was a far higher purpose than could be served by slaughtering and eating animals. (*VA*, April 1849, 109)

The animals, according to Clubb, teach “man” a lesson; they teach “man” how to be “man.”<sup>69</sup> Man finds “in the habits of the lower animals enough to teach him what kind of food was best adapted to his sustenance and conducive to his superior mental development” (109). In order for man to be “man,” for “man” to realize his “higher purpose,” he must behave, paradoxically, more like the “lower” animals, “the elephant, camel, horse, and ox,” who subsist “on the immediate productions of the earth” (109). In an inversion of the pastoral metaphor, animals become the guides of “men,” leading them to their true natures. Vegetarianism was a lesson taught to humans by animals. Clubb claimed that if one followed this lesson, one could become a different person: sagacious rather than ferocious. Clubb and other vegetarians believed that food shaped subjectivity, that you could change who you were through diet. But it was a lesson that each individual had to learn him or herself; vegetarians could guide others toward this decision but not make it for them.

Foucault contends that new agents of pastoral power—such as doctors, reformers, health officers, and government officials—emerged in the nineteenth century to care for the population. I have suggested that we consider print media as a pastor. If we take the pastoral metaphor literally, and read pastoral power as the power to shape how another being feeds itself, then it seems necessary to consider print, in the form of cookbooks and periodicals, as a pastoral force. The first vegetarian journals, the *Vegetarian Advocate* and *Vegetarian Messenger*, served primarily as social movement media, but, appearing amid the women’s magazines of the 1850s (Beetham 57), they also performed a domestic purpose, giving instructions to readers on how to cook and what to eat. They fused the advocacy journal with the domestic magazine, adopting the role of a pastor; in a familiar tone and voice, vegetarian journals guided readers through their daily lives and dietary transformations. Each month, they reappeared to offer reassuring practical and doctrinal advice.

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<sup>69</sup> On animal lessons, or animal pedagogy, see philosopher Kelly Oliver.

We conventionally, or perhaps anthropologically, regard cooking and eating as activities that not only express shared cultural values, but also unify communities through a dietary sense of belonging. Vegetarians of the nineteenth century, however, did not always have an immediate community that they could turn to or eat with. Hence, I have emphasized the importance of print in uniting the flock. Vegetarians constituted an abstract community, one based not always on the immediacy of social relations, but on the circulation of texts. They consolidated themselves as a community through the publication of group statics and by reading the same journal at the same time. Vegetarianism was itself literate eating, eating that was learned through cookbooks and magazines. The VS made use of print media to form itself into a social movement, but also to construct a new community of taste.

As Jack Goody points out, literate cooking is at once constraining and liberating. Without the guiding presence of the teacher or expert (the experienced cook, usually mother or grandmother, according to Goody), printed recipes must rely on printed instructions, which exercise a normative influence over actors (Goody 88). Crucially, however, the constrained, standardized instruction of literate cooking also allows one to learn in private new ways of cooking that are not tied directly to one's immediate environment (88). When learning to cook at home, the student learns how to cook dishes that she or he has grown up eating. As Andrea Broomfield argues, "most women prior to industrialization [...] grew up learning from their mothers and female family members how to plant gardens, forage, cook meals, preserve food for winter, brew medicinal teas, make wine, and churn butter" (106). These local, regional practices replicate the practices of previous generations. Printed recipes, however, allow for an expanded repertoire: one can learn a new dish with new ingredients. Once mediated through print, cooking practices and culinary knowledge are no longer tied to oral instruction; nor are they tied to a specific region or tradition (Goody 88). Rather, dissemination in print severs the transmission of

culinary practices from social reproduction: one can learn a cuisine without being embedded in the culture from which it originated. Print introduces distance and anonymity, a break from tradition that allows private individuals to learn techniques independently from inherited customs. It makes a cuisine portable and replicable, and it opens up possibilities for self-transformation. As Goody argues, “[o]ne can learn in privacy as an adult even better than as a child; one can learn to change one’s cooking, change one’s way of behaving, without seeking the direct advice of others” (88). Goody frames his remarks in reference to social mobility: print allowed the upwardly mobile to learn the etiquette of the society they were aspiring to enter. He, like Beetham, attributes the loss of local, oral traditions to the homogenizing force of print and mass media. However, as the case of the VS suggests, print media could also be used to carve out niche communities of eaters that fell outside of mass culture. What Goody describes as the constraints of literate cooking allowed the VS to disseminate a reproducible system of vegetarianism among isolated and distant adherents. Like the 1850s housewives studied by Broomfield, new vegetarians needed precise instructions on how to change their lives; they needed to learn how to cook in ways that differed radically from their cultural inheritance. Furthermore, rationalized cookbooks helped the VS produce the impression that such a thing as “the Vegetarian system” existed. Vegetarians needed to present their practice as a complete dietary rather than simply the absence of meat.

However, as I have also argued, vegetarian print media not only disseminated information on diet to readers; it also enlisted readers in its production, and by extension, in the production of vegetarianism. The participatory nature of the periodical represents another reason for allying it to Foucault’s pastoral theory of power and governmentality. Foucault describes pastoral governmentality as an individualizing power, a power that makes individuals into subjects: it does not conduct individuals; it conducts the way they conduct themselves, enacting a process of subjectivation, or the making of the subject (“Subject 783-4; Butler, *Psychic*, 13). For example, the

confession, by extracting a statement of truth from the confessor (about their desires and bodies), individualizes the confessor at the same time as it ties them to their identity and their truth. As Edward McGushin's writes, "individuals will come to care about that in them which is truly individual, [and] they will begin to attend to it" (212). For Foucault, this is what it means to be a subject: someone who is "tied to his identity by a conscience or self-knowledge" ("Subject" 781).

The VS followed a similar pattern in the production of vegetarian subjects: it too subjected individuals, or made subjects, through their participation in the production of self-knowledge. Through experimentation with their own diets, vegetarians produced new knowledge about themselves. Narrated and printed in the press, this self-knowledge attached them to their identities as vegetarians and to the truth of vegetarianism. One became a vegetarian subject by producing knowledge about oneself, knowledge that one recognized as true. It involved, for many who practiced it, active experimentation on one's body as a means toward transformation and the promotion, or embodied manifestation, of a new mode of being. Vegetarians developed what McGushin terms a "counter-subjection," a process of subjection which defied pastoral power not by refusing its "imperative to confess" but by forming "new modes of confessing, different relationships and techniques for expressing oneself in order to learn the truth" (216).

Take, for instance, two letters written by a seventy-eight year old vegetarian to the *Lancet*, an established medical journal, in 1900 (figure 1). In the letters, the author, CJ Harris, describes in precise detail the dietary regimen he followed on a thirty day tricycle trip from London to Scotland, not only recording what he ate, but documenting other corporeal experiences as well: in what positions he ate (sitting or standing), at what intervals he ate (irregularly, while riding, before or after sleeping), how much and when he allowed himself to drink water (very little except at night when he drank "freely"), how much he perspired and rested throughout the day, how much time he spent in contemplation, how his body responded with aches and pains. From this

interrogation of himself, the author deduces, like Clubb, a “lesson” for future conduct, one that derives from studying *not* the other animals, but *his own* animal body as he uses it to test the limits of medical knowledge:

My present object in taking this ride was to satisfy myself by personal experience that good health and full measure of vigour can be maintained under total abstinence from flesh, alcohol, and tobacco, and that, too, with such an amount of exercise as was requisite for a considerable effort. The lesson derivable from my experience seems to be that if we fed ourselves more thriftily and lived on simpler food we should enjoy our lives more completely and retain our activity for a longer period. (*The Lancet*, 8 Sept. 1900, 774)

Published in 1900 in the *Lancet*, Harris’s letter reveals the migration of the vegetarian confession from the specialist periodicals of the VS to a respected medical journal. Harris, as he wrote, was “interested in advancing the cause of total abstinence from meat, alcohol, and tobacco” (*Lancet*, 25 Aug., 1900, 629). It was partially the participatory nature of periodicals, their reliance on incorporating contributions from readers, that allowed him to do so. Even though the *Lancet* did not devote itself to the science of nutrition, it offered the cycling vegetarian a public space in which to construct his vegetarian identity and self-knowledge—and thus to bring the subject of vegetarianism to new readers. In his letters, Harris, the self-making vegetarian, does not follow a prescribed code of behavior, nor does he submit to scientific authority, but, experimenting on himself, uses his “personal experience” as a site of truth production, creating, to his mind, empirical knowledge on how to live “more completely,” on how to realize and attain the full enjoyment of one’s self. By testing the limits of himself through dietary experimentation and physical exercise, the seventy-eight-year-old tricyclist produces himself as both a subject and object of knowledge, the interpreter and source of meaning, the observer and observed.

As Harris’s letters and self-experimentation suggest, vegetarianism represented itself as a practice of self-care, one oriented toward health as salvation. But, as I have suggested, the emphasis on self-care, on turning others toward the care of themselves, also served as a tactic in



the making of converts. The VS encouraged others to care for themselves, cultivate themselves, and thus to identify with their newly-crafted individuality; vegetarians, like Harris and others I have examined, individualized themselves through their practice, and became bound to the identity that they had created and to the path of salvation that they had forged. Serial print media thus not only made vegetarianism available for a wider audience; the genre of the serial periodical also encouraged and made possible this process of identification. That is, by encouraging readers to contribute to vegetarian and general journals, the VS opened up a path for them to recognize themselves as vegetarians, as agents in the vegetarian movement. They saw their personal narratives published in correspondence sections; they saw their lives recorded in the VS's statistics of membership. One became a vegetarian by participating in the vegetarian movement and by proving vegetarianism to be the healthiest, happiest way of living. In doing so vegetarians created a strong bond between themselves and the practice of vegetarianism; the diet made them who they were—healthy, strong, and happy in Harris's case—and thus they felt bound to it. Vegetarian periodicals, by creating routes for readers to contribute to the content of the journal, created a field of agency that, as I have argued, converted others to vegetarianism by allowing them to convert themselves.

Margaret Beetham defines the periodical as an open and closed genre: open because it allows readers to pick and chose which articles they read and in which order, breaking from the linearity of books; closed because it appears within a regular temporal structure, which Beetham suggests may perform “an important regulating mechanism in [readers] lives” (28). This balance of openness against a closed structure served the interests of the vegetarian movement: the openness of the periodical form allowed readers to follow and engage with the VS in multiple ways, but its temporal regularity also created a structure for the habituation of the practice; on a consistent, monthly basis, it reinforced the pastoral connection between the society and its

members. We might further say vegetarianism, like the genre of the periodical, was itself open and closed: closed because it was defined by a strict prohibition against the flesh; open because it left it up to readers to decide why and how they practiced the diet. What dishes they prepared, ingredients they used, and ethical principles they adopted were all left up to their judgement. Indeed, vegetarianism constantly changed and developed, incorporating new foods and flavours into its repertoire. The practice was a dialogue, one that was fostered by the heteroglossia of the press. As I have demonstrated, readers wrote letters describing their practice of the diet, and they contributed their own meal plans and preferences. After Newman's reforms, they could determine how they converted and the level of strictness in their diet. With Beatrice Lindsay, they were actively encouraged to explore new foods and experiment on themselves, reporting back to Lindsay with their successes and failures. This dialogism, then, is where I rest my case for the importance of print media in formation of the vegetarian movement and creation of its community of taste: the periodical allowed vegetarians to conduct and pastor themselves. By contributing their letters, recipes, and subscriptions to the vegetarian journal, vegetarians also contributed to the vegetarian movement and their own self-transformation, forging a bond among all three—the journal, the movement, and themselves.

A defining characteristic of the periodical genre is its repetition, which, as I have suggested, allowed it to keep members regularly informed and interested in the movement; however, at times vegetarians felt that they were forced to become too repetitive. The Reverend James Clark, who quarrelled with Newman over associates, lamented in 1873 that many vegetarians found themselves “repeating the same truths, and continually convincing the same people of the same things. Meet them and convince them to-day, yet next week they might be found just where they were before” (*DF*, Dec 1873, 353). Vegetarians, Clark suggested, had to repeat themselves; indeed, in how many different ways can one say, *stop eating animals*? The form

of the periodical, its characteristic “seriality and miscellaneity” (Mussell 50), allowed the VS to say the same thing, to repeat the same message, in multiple different formats and genres across the years. In the framework of the press, the same arguments (on the economy, chemistry, physiology, and morality of vegetarianism) could be repackaged and made new.

A RIDE FROM LONDON TO EDINBURGH  
AND BACK ON A TRICYCLE BY A  
VEGETARIAN IN HIS SEVENTY-  
EIGHTH YEAR.

*To the Editors of THE LANCET.*

SIRS,—I am much interested in advancing the cause of total abstinence from meat, alcohol, and tobacco, and I have practised it on myself for more than four years. I have just returned from riding to Edinburgh and back on my tricycle and I am desirous of ascertaining whether anyone of my age—78 years next April—has accomplished a similar journey either on flesh or vegetarian diet. If you can kindly help me in this matter I shall esteem it a favour.

I left London on July 11th and my sleeping places during my ride were—July 11th, Dunstable; 12th, Northampton; 13th, Leicester; 14th and 15th, Matlock Bath; 16th, Buxton; 17th, Altrincham; 18th, Preston; 19th, Milnthorpe; 20th, Grasmere; 21st and 22nd, Keswick; 23rd, Longtown; 24th, Hawick; 25th, Edinburgh; 26th, Dunbar; 27th, Belford; 28th and 29th, Alnwick; 30th, Durham; 31st, Northallerton; August 1st, Ferrybridge; 2nd, Retford; 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, and 7th, Newark, detained by the rain; 8th, Stamford; 9th, Normon Cross; 10th, Hitchin; 11th, home in London.

During the 31 days I was away I slept in 24 beds. I experienced the greatest kindness everywhere and I had little or no trouble with my tricycle. My weight on my return was the same as when I started—116 lb. net. My tricycle weighed 45 lb. without luggage, and with what I carried about 60 lb. It was geared up to 72 and my cranks were seven inches in length. I am open to be examined by any medical man as to my bodily health.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Kilburn Priory, N.W. C. J. HARRIS, M.R.C.S. Eng., &c.

Figure 7.1: *The Lancet*, 25 August, 1900, 629.

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