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"Plus apud nos vera ratio valet, quam vulgi opinio."

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ON DIET.

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(Continued from our last.)

The comparative amount of nutriment contained in the most nutritious form of animal and vegetable food, is, according to Professor Johnston, about 3 to 1.* "Or a pound of beef steak is as nutritive as three pounds of wheaten bread, in so far as the nutritive value depends upon this one ingredient," i.e., albumen. Thus we find that as Coleridge defined a rogue to be a fool with a circumdendibus, so we may consider a man who lives on vegetables alone to be a roundabout flesh-eater; for by a circuitous route he gets the same albumen as the beef-eater gets directly. Whether it is well to live solely on vegetables, or solely on animal food, or on a mixture of both, is a question to be decided by the whole circumstances of the eater. The appeal to nature made by the vegetarian propagandists, is manifestly futile; for man's nature is progress, and as one generation succeeds another, man alone, of all creatures that dwell upon earth, inherits the accumulated acquisitions of those who lived before, and every child born stands in a new relation to the external world to what its parents did. Man is "the heir of all the ages," as such he accepts on his birth new duties in a new sphere of action from those who went before him. Is he to be denied the right of innovation, perpetual innovation, and general progress in the food which is so essential to his life? His nature is himself. He alone can resolve the problem

of his duties for himself. If he finds that for their fulfilment he requires to abstain from flesh, let him abstain; but let him not insist upon putting a straight jacket upon his neighbor who is under no such necessity, and who, on the other hand, finds he can do his work better if he live on meat. Above all, it is lamentable that the apostles of this vegetable creed should be so carried away by their fanatical exclusiveness, as to convert the board of hospitality, where the bread, the meat, and the salt are spread to satisfy the various instincts of our bodily requirements, and to express the oneness of our origin, our progress, and our destiny, into a conspirator's meal, at which each guest pledges himself against the common food of his fellow-men. In former times, when men fasted, they went some days' journey into the wilderness, not to annoy their neighbors with their lugubrious faces. Might not all exclusionists in diet do well to follow this example? But we have said enough, perhaps too much, upon this head, and we must conclude with the saying of Goethe—"That is good which does us good." Newton wrote his treatise on optics living upon wine and water, biscuits and tobacco. That was good for him. We might have injured his labors if we had insisted upon his eating a mutton chop. But it does not follow, that if we confine ourselves to biscuits and sherry, in process of time we shall be transformed into Newtons. In short, the reason of every man is, or ought to be, the absolute lawgiver upon this matter to himself, only the reason should be enlightened by the fullest knowledge of how he can best secure the ends it seeks. But as these

* Op. cit. p. 128.