

THE POLITICAL ECONOMY ASPECT OF A SIMPLE NATIONAL DIETARY.

ASIDE altogether from the great hygienic advantages of a simple, spare diet, the saving to individuals, communities and nations, from the general use of such a diet, as compared with that of luxurious abundance which is now consumed, would be incalculable. On the other hand, history affords abundant proof that the successive degeneracy and downfall of each of the various nations which have in succession ruled the world, had its commencement in a luxurious costly diet. We find not only individuals, but communities—such as in monasteries, as well as whole nations consisting of millions of people, living in unusual health and vigor, often to extreme old age, on the most simple kind of food, costing not one-fourth, perhaps not one-tenth as much as the average consumed by Canadians, or by Americans or Europeans. Elsewhere in this number of the JOURNAL are given numerous instances and abundant evidence of this. Is it not then the duty of the Government of a country entrusted as it is with the welfare of the people—with all affairs of political economy—with revenue, taxes, cheap food and surpluses—to give

some special consideration to the manner in which the people are fed, with the view to the cost of the food, as well as, also, to its healthfulness, and not only as regards those who require to be confined in prisons and asylums, but the entire masses of the people of the country? Sacred writings inculcate the principle here indicated. The renowned Plato went so far in advocating simplicity in national dietary as to insist that all books which pictured gratification in eating and drinking should be suppressed. Should "prohibition" in respect to alcoholic beverages ever prove to be of practical effect, why should not there be then legislation with regard to diet,—with the prohibition of costly, injurious articles of food? The wisdom of legislation of this sort, however, is very questionable. But a great deal might be done in this behalf by a systematic education of the people in regard to economy in diet. And the people will listen and give heed to advice on economy in diet more than they will to that on health in diet. The time will come again when Governments will see the wisdom of giving attention to this subject.

DIET IN RELATION TO HEALTH, COMFORT AND LONG LIFE.

THE following facts are from a paper read not long ago before the California State Medical Society, by Dr. Remondino. "Old Parr," as he was long called, who died at the age of one hundred and fifty-six years, had always lived on a very simple, spare diet. A post mortem examination on his body was made by the eminent anatomist, Harvey, who reported that he found no morbid condition of any organ indicating chronic disease, nor any apparent reason for death, and that the old gentleman might have lived a quarter of a century more as well as not, if he had not deviated from his usual frugal mode of life. The immediate cause of the death of this remarkable man was an unusual

surfeit occasioned by a visit to the king, who made a feast in his honor, in partaking of which "Old Parr" departed from his usual simple regimen, and induced a fit of indigestion from which he died.

Jonas, a monk in the monastery of the Mochans, in Egypt, lived to the age of eighty-five years on a diet of raw herbs. The Trappist monks during one-half of the year eat but once a day, and the rest of the year but twice a day. Their fare is of the most frugal character, being composed wholly of fruits, grains, vegetables and milk. They never take meat in any form, and fast a large number of days in each year. St. Anthony and his followers ate only bread with a little salt and water, and