

The Household.

Vegetables as Health Preservatives.

BY A FAMILY DOCTOR.

Most of us allow our individual tastes or instincts to guide us, in a great measure, in the selection of the vegetables we partake of at table. Not a bad plan either. The lower animals, even the *Carnivora*, seem to know that certain plants and grasses ought to be partaken of periodically, to keep their blood in a state of purity and their whole system in working order. Such knowledge on their part is innate. But men as rational beings ought, I think, to know a little more than they do about the peculiarities and properties of the various vegetables they use as food. The selection of these is generally left to the cook. The cook knows—traditionally one might say—that certain vegetables go well with certain joints or certain dishes, that it is the time-honored custom to serve this with that.

It is no part of my purpose at present to show how far tradition or precedent may sometimes lead the cook astray, nor have I anything save respect for prejudice or peculiarity of individual taste. On the contrary, I would say that if a person's taste leads him to eschew spinach or parsnips, for instance, he is better without them.

Let me review a few of the vegetables which commonly find their way to our tables, considering more particularly their therapeutical effects on the system.

The first great natural family that I think of is the *Solanaceae*. This family of plants contributes largely to our supply of medicines and luxuries, as well as our food. About the first two named I have nothing now to say, except that it is somewhat strange that such strongly poisonous plants as nightshade and tobacco should be first cousin to the useful egg-plant, the delicious tomato, and that friend to rich as well as poor, the potato, not to mention the capsicum, naturally more used in hot countries than in temperate climes.

The egg-plant should, in my opinion, be used to a greater extent than it is. It is not difficult to cultivate; it is ornamental, and a wholesome and useful vegetable.

The tomato should also be a greater favorite with us. It contains a cooling acid, a volatile oil, some mineral matter and salts, as well as fragrant resinous matter. It is used in soups, ketchups, sauces, and pickles. But inasmuch as the volatile oil—which words I purposely italicise in the sentence—is dissipated by heat, the ripe tomato should, in my opinion, be consumed raw if it is considered palatable—i. e., if it suits the individual taste. N. B.—No attempt should be made by any one to acquire particular tastes, whether for tobacco, strange vegetables, olives, or caviare; to do so is simply to turn one's idiosyncrasy "tap-salterie," to use a most expressive Scotch word. Let, therefore, whosoever is fond of any particular vegetable eat freely thereof; it is a food natural to him, a food that suits his system and cannot injure him; what he does not like he ought to avoid; there is no craving in the system for it, no want in his organism which it can supply. I have often observed that people of the nervous or nervo-sanguineous temperament are more partial to Solanaceous vegetables—potatoes, for instance—than those of the lymphatic are. As an article of diet potatoes suit such people, for in addition to their nutrient qualities they contain a certain amount of a property that is singularly soothing to the nerves.

From the natural order *Cruciferae*, we have a whole host of delicious and useful table vegetables. Let me bring a few of these forward for inspection.

As roast beef is an Englishman's favorite dish, I naturally think first of *horse-radish* and *mustard*. Both are too well known to need description; the horse-radish is a capital aid to digestion.

Mustard is a good stomachic; the ground seeds are used or the tender leaves in salads. Bearing in mind how much mustard suffers at the hands of the unprincipled dealer, I think it is a pity mustard is not more often grown for table consumption in our kitchen gardens. The seeds of home-cultivated mustard, pounded in a mortar with cream and a little salt added, make a sauce fit for an epicure.

Radishes, when grown on good, not over-rich soil, and when of medium size and perfectly fresh, are among the most wholesome vegetables we possess. They are stomachic and appetising and it should not be forgotten that they possess demulcent and diuretic properties. They are not so

often used boiled as they ought to be. When eaten raw, care should be taken to masticate them properly; "bolted" they are injurious.

Cress, generally called American Cress, is a mild stomachic; it forms a valuable adjunct to a salad. *Water-cress* is a still more important vegetable, possessing, as I believe it does, tonic properties. It is usually eaten with cheese, but ought to be used with beef and mutton.

The vegetables we usually designate by the name of greens, such as *cabbage*, *kale*, *brocoli*, or *cauliflower*, *sprouting brocoli*, *Brussels sprouts*, &c., are all more or less nourishing, although they contain a large proportion of water. As medicinal articles of diet they are invaluable, possessing blood-purifying properties, for they are antiscorbutic, mildly laxative and diuretic, in some degree tonic, and they have moreover an indirect action on the liver itself. In spring and summer they are especially to be recommended, with this reservation, however—they must not be eaten too freely, or by persons the mucous membranes of whose alimentary canals are too easily irritated. Boiled rice goes excellently well with cabbage or greens of any kind, so does barley.

Spinach, it should be remembered by those fond of it, is laxative in its properties and also highly diuretic. It makes an excellent breakfast vegetable for hot weather, although few people in this country think of cooking vegetables for morning consumption.

The *turnip*, another of the *Cruciferae*, is far more valuable as an article of diet or adjunct to other food than most people think. It is also more nutrient than is generally supposed, and is valuable as a demulcent. Swedish turnips are usually ignored by the cook; this is a pity; they are better in every way than any other kind. Turnips ought to be well chosen, not too big nor too small; they ought to be gathered fresh, well boiled and well mashed. The green tops of the young turnips are also very healthful and in some degree tonic.

Parsnips and *carrots* belong to the *Umbelliferae* family, and probably possess in some slight degree the medicinal properties of that family. In addition therefore to being highly nutritious, owing to the large quantity of starch they contain, they are, we may presume, alterative and resolvent. They make, at all events, an excellent change in our vegetable scale of diet.

This is probably the proper place to mention that constant change, in the articles of a vegetable nature which we consume, is as much to be recommended as in those procured from the animal kingdom.

Parsley is another of the umbelliferous vegetables used at table, chiefly for garnishing or stuffing. It is an excellent blood-purifying herb, and deserves to be used far more than it is. It ought to be put in soups and in sauces, eaten raw and eaten cooked. It is well known that parsley chewed sweetens the breath.

Beans of all kinds are nutritious, but people whose digestive organs are not strong should take care how they indulge in them. French beans require to be very tender indeed, and very well cooked, to be safe.

Celery is another vegetable which, though wholesome enough when cooked and mixed in soups, &c., should be partaken of with caution in the raw state, especially by delicate people or those who lead a sedentary life.

Rhubarb is most wholesome; it helps to purify and cool the blood, and to a great extent aids digestion, while at the same time it is healthfully laxative.

Garden lettuces. These vegetables are well known to possess anodyne and narcotic properties. Hence they are best for supper. They should, however, be eaten sparingly, and the younger and fresher they are the better. The older leaves should be rejected as apt to irritate instead of cooling the system.

Asparagus belongs to the *Liliaceae*, which gives us the medicinal squill. It is a delicious and very wholesome vegetable, and contains cooling diuretic properties; indeed it seems to soothe the mucous membranes of both lungs and kidneys, while it acts sedatively at the same time.

Onions, *shallots*, *chives* and *leeks* are all members of the family *Liliaceae*, and are not only highly nutritious when properly cooked, but are possessed in a greater or less degree of cooling and diuretic properties. They are also valuable stomachics and demulcents, but are apt to disagree and should therefore be partaken of but sparingly. They have an effect for good on common colds and slight congestions of the air-passages.

From the natural family *Cucurbitaceae* we get

many valuable vegetables, some of which, as the *cucumber*, are eaten raw. This latter is, if eaten with pepper and vinegar, a stomachic stimulant, and it also purifies the blood by acting on the secreting organs. It should never be partaken of too freely, even by those whose digestive organs are strong, and by dyspeptics not at all.

There are many other vegetables which I might mention, but space warns me to stay my hand. Let me just say once more, that no one should attempt to acquire a taste for any particular vegetable, but be guided by that which nature has given him; and that vegetables are sure to do good, when partaken of judiciously and not ever-freely. —*Cassell's Magazine*.

Family Circle.

A SOCIETY BARD.

I.

"Well, yes, I am glad to be back in town," said Miss Fillingham as she settled herself comfortably in a deep basket-chair on the veranda and glanced coquettishly at a gentleman who took a seat opposite to her.

"So you've been to Rome?" he asked. "Oh, yes; we've done nothing but go round churches and museums, and I've hardly seen a soul we know since we left. I never was so tired of anything in my life," she returned with charming frankness. "You see I like people, and papa likes places. Talk about people being monotonous; I'm sure they are as different as can be, and those churches and Madonnas are the same in every town. I always tell papa when he wants me to admire one of those tiresome St. Sebastians with a skewer through him—I mean an arrow, you know—that I saw it in the last museum we went to."

Whereat Miss Fillingham sighed, and Mr. Lovett, the gentleman appealed to, leaned forward on an elaborately carved stick, and smiled what cursory critics might have called a rather self-conscious smile.

On nearer inspection it was clear that he had fine capabilities for being amused, while proclaimed themselves in flexible under-cylids and a remarkably mobile mouth. He had a number of horizontal lines across his forehead and several wrinkles at times in the upper lip. To the more general view he was tall and well-proportioned, exceptionally well dressed, and conspicuous for an elaborate air of attention which he seldom failed to give to attractive women.

The immediate object of his solicitude this morning was dressed with elaborate simplicity in a white dress and broad-brimmed hat, which contrasted strangely with her little pert town-bred air. As she lounged back on her luxurious cushions and glanced with her sleepy Southern-looking eyes at her neighbor, she played with a bunch of ox-eyed daisies in her belt, and tapped her diminutive and coquettishly shod feet on the stone veranda.

They were sitting in the front of a long two storied house, lying in a part of Kensington where there are still acres of gardens to make us forget, in Summer-time, that we are in the largest and most fog-laden city in the world.

Elsewhere there may be the din of traffic, the hurrying of busy feet, the squalor of crowded alleys, the struggle, the hunger and despair which go to make up the lives of toiling millions; here, within snug red-brick walls, a languid quiet prevailed. The splash of a small fountain where the gold fish played, the shrill cry of a parrot, and in the distance, from another lawn, the rhythmic sound of a scythe mowing grass, were the only sounds that met the ear. The bright May sun glanced on the open windows of the long low-lying house, lit up the hawthorn trees ablaze with blossoms, and speckled the smooth sweep of lawn with cool blue shadows. Not a murmur from the great city reached this garden, where the birds built and the chestnuts bloomed as if they were leagues from any town.

"There's to be a female friend, a charming friend, to look after us," said the young lady, as they looked out lazily over the sun-flecked lawn.

"You are to be looked after—suppose I undertake the office?" returned Mr. Lovett slowly.

"I do believe papa thinks you are going to run away with me," she said, pouting, while he again smiled at her with the same smile.

Mr. Lovett, who had, as a rule, no sort of toleration for silly people, had the weakness to be flattered by this particular form of silliness. He was essentially an opportunist, and it had become a habit of his to luxuriate in any appropriate such chance phrases as might be conciliating to his vanity. He was, besides, a gentleman with a subtle appreciation for the harmonies in a situation, and the present one offered him a young lady and such a smooth flowing set of emotions as were apt to the drifting white clouds, the faint splash of the fountain, and the idle May-day. Mr. Lovett was at no time one of those captious mortals who refuse any of the goods that are gratuitously provided them.

"Well, at any rate, Ethel Surtees is coming to stay here," said Susie; "aren't you glad? It's no use saying you're not, because I know you are."

"Of course any friend of yours I am always delighted with," he replied in stereotyped phrase, while his mind, with one of those quick transitions usual to mobile natures, gave a sort of bound back into the previous Summer.

Ethel Surtees. The name suggested a time of roses, of soft Summer nights, and Summer stars, and eyes that looked at him with a grave gray light. Those were connected with emotions too, if not of another kind, at least of another degree.

It was with almost an unreal feeling that he jumped up the next minute, at Susie's bidding, to find her parasol.

Miss Fillingham was an only child. Her father, a busy man, an architect at the top of his profession, spoiled her in a careless, off-hand way, and Mrs. Fillingham, a capricious and tearful invalid, was severe and over-indulgent, with the usual captiousness of ladies who live in over-heated rooms and are seldom out of the doctor's hands. Her daughter paid little attention to either mood. The only person indeed of whom she stood in any sort of awe was her cousin—a girl three years her senior. Susie Fillingham had been educated with Ethel Surtees, so that they had a further warrant for intimacy than their cousinship afforded, and so great was the influence which the elder girl exercised over the younger that Mr. and