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"Thy Will be Done on Earth."

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Aristophagy.



"Each good thought or action moves the dark world nearer to the sun."

Whittier.

"We owe to genius always the same debt of lifting the curtain from the Common and showing us that Divinities are sitting disguised in the seeming gang of gypsies and pedlars."

Emerson.

I have taken a clean sheet of paper and have written upon it a new word—Aristophagy—and why?

Why? Because the world is always asking me "Why are you a vegetarian?" "Is it because you cannot afford to buy meat? Come with us and we will give you a dinner of fat things washed down with wine freed from its lees."

"Is it because your stomach is weak?" "Well then consult the learned physicians who know the secrets of metabolism and when they have strengthened your digestion come to us in our halls of feasting and we will give you all the good cheer which the hecatombs of the slain can provide."

"Is it because" a thousand questions they would ask, a thousand causes they would suggest, and to all I have but one answer.

I do not vegetare because it is cheaper so to do, or because flesh meat weakens the body and shortens the life, or because I had an inherited repugnance to the taste of it, but I do so because I want my feeding to be in harmony with my aspirations.

I want to eat only the best things.

I have been taught from childhood that if I want my musical taste developed on the best lines I must select only the best music to listen to, and if I do not like it and do not understand it at first, I must be willing to patiently wait and listen until at length some of its sweet beauty will creep into my soul and I shall come into joyful communion with the spirits of the higher aether.

I have been taught from earliest youth that if I want to understand the best in Art I must not fill my eyes with half-penny Comic Cuts, or with the sensational broadsheets of Police News, but must plead with myself until the mystery of a Turner begins to be revealed to my patient contemplation, or the grand breadth of a Velasquez comes within my power to understand.

So, too, in Literature, it is the sad experience of us all that much of the best and the most beautiful is lost to those whose mental food consists, not indeed of the Newgate Calendar and "penny dreadful," but of that frothy mass of waste mind which is thrown up like scum upon the glowing molten metal of life—novels, novelettes, magazines and serials, of a type which neither teach the ignorant, nor strengthen the weak, nor develop the immature.

To develop the mind it is wise, nay, it is necessary, to study the best in literature.

In all these things it is not enough to stand afar off and gaze in rapt admiration, as at some passing god, and then to sit down again in our slime.

He who would understand and develop, must put his own efforts into play in order to copy the master's work, so that he may comprehend it the more perfectly.

Has not Professor Shairp said somewhere "whatever good thoughts or feelings we have, we must try earnestly to embody them in act if we wish to grow," and is not this true?

Where the best are selected for this purpose we are said to be governed by what is called an "aristocracy"—a government by the best.

May I not, then, plead that we may have, too, a class of men and women who shall carry these principles of development, by selecting the best, into the realm of dietary also?

May we not too have our Aristophagists—our eaters of the best—men and women who refuse to eat the common garbage of the undeveloped, and who, in their earnest search for the ideals of life, refuse to be dragged down by contact with the food of the shambles.

I have no quarrel with the man who eats animals because he thinks that otherwise the animals will eat him. He has his place in the economy of Nature, just as hyenas and vultures have theirs.

I have no quarrel with the pseudo-dainty woman who refuses to go into a slum cottage because it is not clean, and yet who calmly sneers at Vegetarians as faddists, and

eats food which is much more unclean than the most neglected of living gutter children made in the divine image.

These children are alive—the meat is dead, and so it will remain unclean, be it spiced ever so highly, until it has been received into the mystic cauldron, resolved into its atoms, and been taken up into the whirl of vital force again. I have no quarrel with her, she has her place in Nature.

I have no quarrel with the blind that they cannot see nor with the lame that they cannot walk, but I have a message to those who are of high lineage and noble blood but who are bound down by chains of ignorance into a life that is not theirs.

Men and women of the highest caste who have been brought up to feed with the hyenas and wolves of life and have been taught that their dietary was the dead bodies of the slaughtered.

Unconscious of their divine origin and of their kinship with the princely host whose food is purest manna, they live in Egyptian bondage and believe themselves to be the slaves of Egyptian masters.

The Heralds of the Dawn, The Heralds of the Golden Age, The Heralds of the Century of Promise, come like Moses and Aaron of old to sound the clarion cry, to wake the sleepers, to call into responsive being that inner conscience, that silent but ever present string which waits but the right note to respond to.

The earth is full of princes of royal blood going about clad in the garments of the peasant. It is for us to proclaim to these their royal parentage and then they will cast away their torn rags and don the vestments due to their rank.

The call is not to all; it is only to those who are conscious within themselves of its truth and beauty when once they have been told that

Man's best food does not consist of the dead bodies of slaughtered animals.

There are thousands who are daily eating their bit of meat under a sense of duty mingled with a deep down loathing.

They have been told that it is necessary for them to eat it, and in sweet docility they have trodden down their higher promptings and have eaten daily.

To such I would proclaim in no uncertain voice the day of deliverance and of freedom from their bondage.

Flesh food is not necessary to the highest development of mind or body.

There are still thousands more who turn with tender pity to the lowing herds of thirsty cattle, driven to their doom, and vainly wonder what should be done.

With deep sympathy for all that sorrows and suffers, they turn away their faces from the slaughter-houses and shut out the terrible taint of blood-shedding from their dinner table.

With simple piety they take their mutton and forget its connection with the sheep playing in the meadows with the lambkins.

With simple piety they carve the beef and will not think of the gentle mother cows they often and again have milked and kissed and patted.

They dare not contemplate the *via dolorosa*, that sad lonely path of darkness and suffering, which leads, thorn-capped, from the happy fields to the black chamber room of death.

They would dream terrible dreams, or lie long nights sleepless, if only they allowed themselves to think.

So they sorrow and sorrow, and wonder what it all means, and pray for the time when all this terrible chapter of agony and sorrow will be ended and a new leaf will be turned, and the millennial joys will come.

To those myriad gentle longing souls I would say—your millennium is at hand:

No distant far off shores to seek,
No wondrous heights to climb;
No heaven of heavens impossible to reach,
Nor hopelessly sublime.

The light is shining even now within your breast and your own soul is trying to show you that here and now and to-day the joy of sacrifice may beautify your life.

These, then, are some of the types of the unknown kings and of royalty chained to common clay.

These are they who are called to be deliverers, to be Joshuas, to be Aristophagists.

And so I return to the place from where I started. Aristophagy—the eating only of the best—is, like Aristocracy, confined to the few. Many there will be who will come to vegetarian meetings; many there will be who will jeer and gibe and scoff; but few—only a few—are fitted to enter the narrow gate of the sacrificial fold, and who being so fitted, will be able to see the beauty of the land of promise—a land flowing with milk and honey, a land of harvests and of orchards, a land of vines and of pomegranates, a land of corn and of wine, a land of olives and of nut trees.

And even of the few who are caught within the golden doors there will yet be some who have come there by glamour only, and who will tire of food celestial, and who will long to go back to old Egypt with its caldrons of stewing flesh.

What matters it? If any hasten on too rapidly for their strength, what wonder if sometimes they sink by the way and flag. There is no need to be disheartened by these so-called failures. It is better to have aimed high and failed, than never to have aimed at all.

Some have entered upon the race and have broken down, and they have excused themselves upon the plea that the prize was not worth having, that its gleaming gold was but glittering glamour and its form of beauty but an empty mirage.

What has this to do with those who are still running stout and strong, and who are beginning, here and there, to see glimpses of the land itself. Their faith in the right is being already crowned with the sweet assurance of sight, and what matter it to them if thousands fall by the way. They know what they have believed and are satisfied.

Our duty to the weaker ones, who fall by the way, is to comfort and cheer them, and with helping hand assure them that "sometime, in His own time" they will be able again to take up the cry to victory.

My message is to those who can, to those who are conscious of the rightness of it all, to those who are Aristophagists by birth and breeding. To them, and to them only, do I send out the invitation to come and join The Order, for they alone are eligible.

Josiah Oldfield.

LIFE'S POSSIBILITIES.

Rot many of us at least are living at our best. We linger in the lowlands because we are afraid to climb into the mountains. The steepness and ruggedness dismay us, and so we stay in the misty valleys and do not learn the mystery of the hills.

We do not know what we lose in our self-indulgence, what glory awaits us if only we had courage for the mountain climb, what blessing we should find if only we would move to the uplands of God.

J. R. Miller, D.D.