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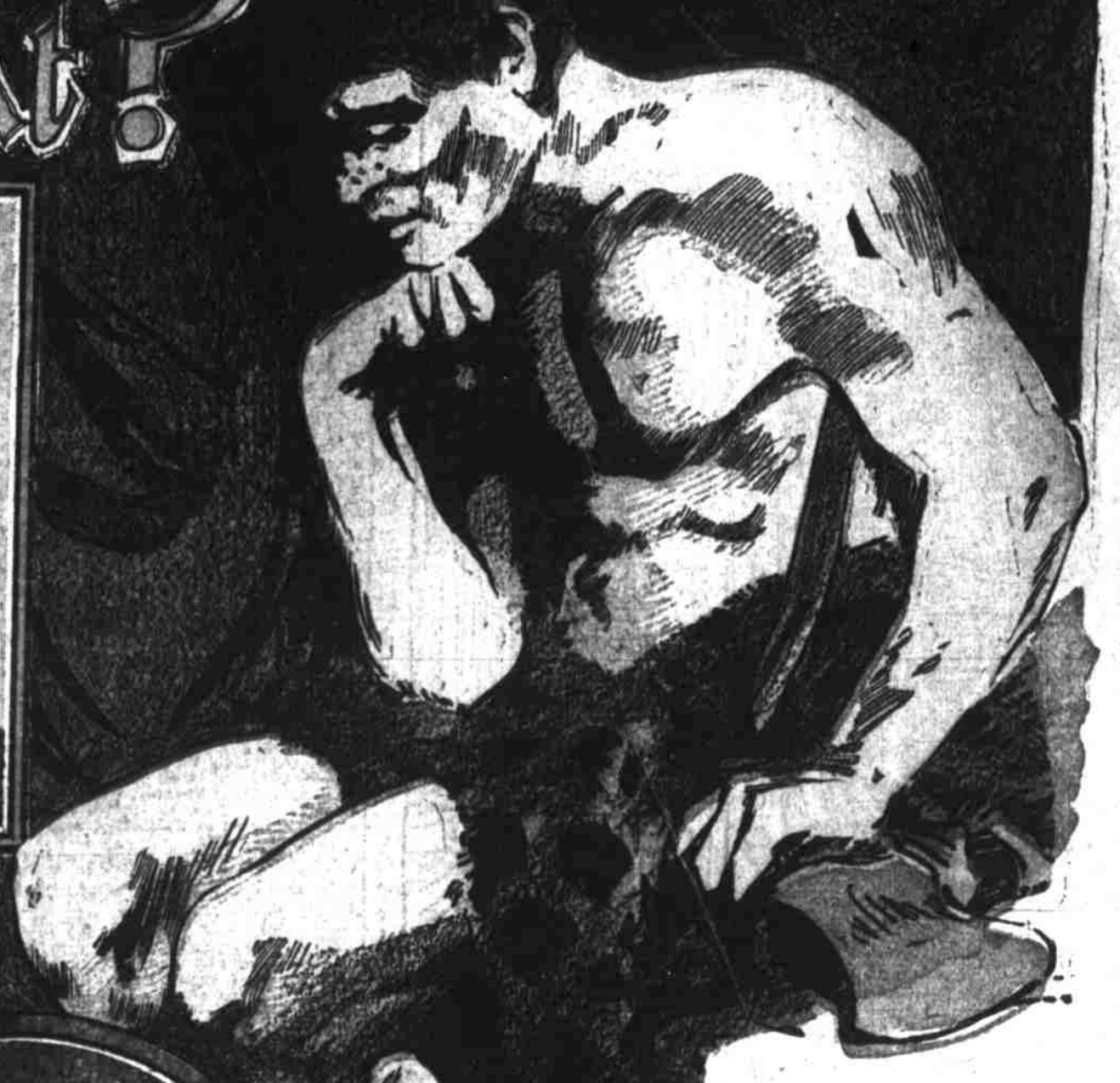
What Shall We Eat?



Dr. Harvey W. Wiley, Chief Government Department of Food Problems



Prof. John P. Norton, Active in the Health Movement



The National Problem that Scientists Have Combined to Solve.

WHAT shall we eat? Persistently propounded in all parts of the United States, this question is answered in so many and contradictory ways that the average person—and little wonder—is disheartened.

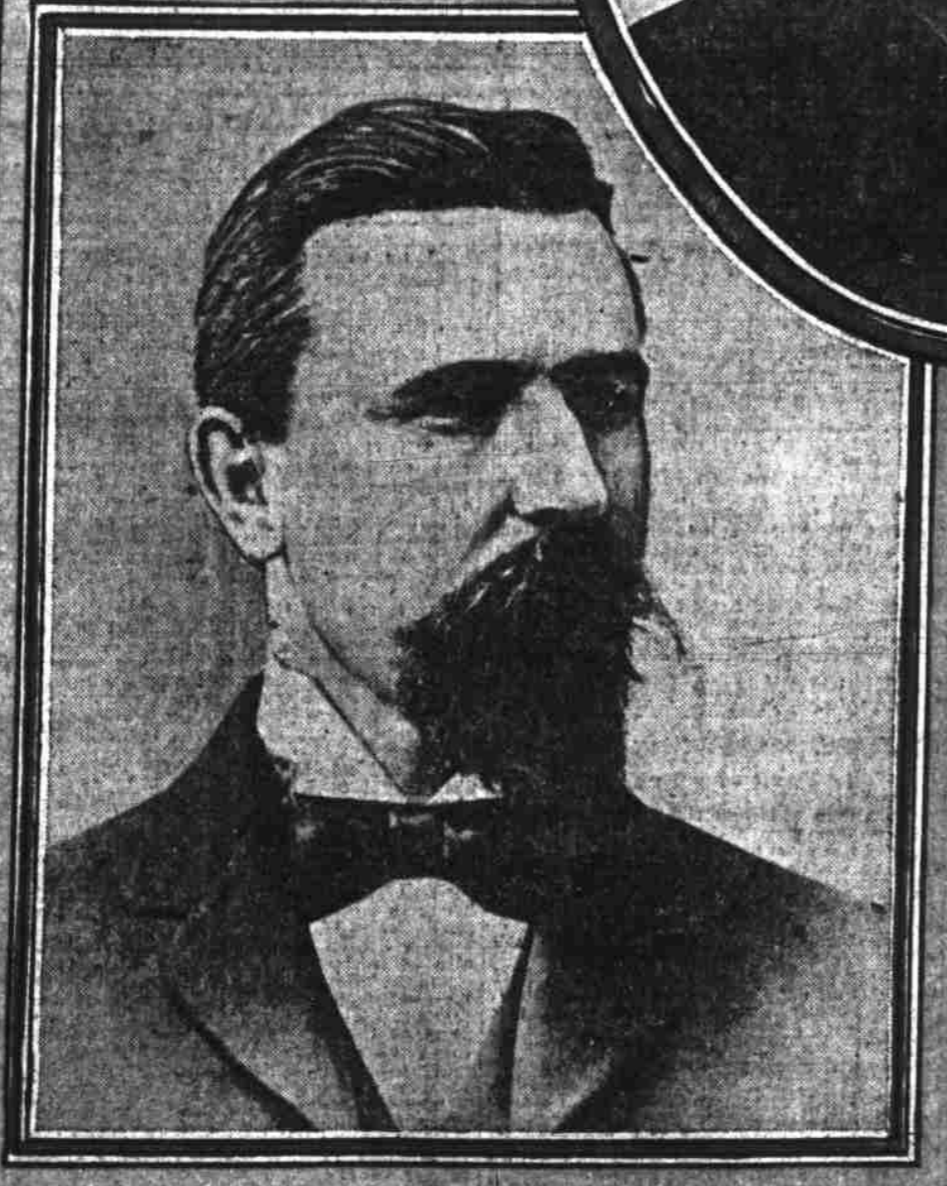
Impure food agitation, revelations concerning packing-house methods and experiments for the purpose of testing the comparative efficiency of meat versus vegetable diet—these things have erected large interrogation points in the minds of most of us regarding the things we take into our stomachs for nourishment.

Especial impetus has been given to the discussion by an expression by the president of the United States, in which he declared that health is the greatest national asset, and that the pursuit of it should be made a matter of patriotism.

Two of the greatest leaders of food thought—Dr. H. W. Wiley, of the United States Agricultural Department, and Professor Irving Fisher, of Yale, have been conducting investigations, the result of which must be of great moment.

And yet, if one reduces these conclusions to first analysis, there remains little more than the homely advice, to let the appetite be a guide in the matter of eating, to eat full and plenty of wholesome food, without regard to whether it is meat or vegetable. One "don't," startling in its innovation, the leaders seem to agree on, and it is: "Don't diet."

Professor Fisher has offered as a motto for proper eating, "Choose and chew," and some one has suggested that this may be carried a step further, and made to read: "Choose, chew and eschew."



Prof. R. H. Chittenden of Yale



Prof. Irving Fisher of Yale, Head of the Committee of 100

NATIONAL in scope has the ideal food discussion become since President Roosevelt, in a strong letter to Professor Fisher, declared that "the preservation of national vigor should be a matter of patriotism."

This letter was inspired by a reference to the committee of one hundred, of which Professor Fisher is president, whose work is to prevent disease and raise the standard of physical well-being throughout the United States. A study of the food subject is the predominant part of the work.

In his letter to Professor Fisher, the president said:

"Our national health is physically our greatest national asset. To prevent any possible deterioration of the American stock should be a national ambition.

"We cannot too strongly insist on the necessity of proper ideals for the family, for simple living, and for those habits and tastes which produce vigor and make men capable of strenuous service to their country."

Thus encouraged, the committee of one hundred has planned to give battle royal to the forces of improper eating. But first, it is seeking to learn what and how we should eat.

The committee of one hundred was appointed at the instance of the American Association for the Advancement of Science because of a paper read before that body at its last annual meeting by Professor John Pease Norton urging the establishment of a national department of health.

Professor Fisher was president of the section of the society before which the paper was read, and he was directed to select a committee of one hundred to formulate the plans. Professor Norton was a pupil at Yale of Professor

Fisher in economics.

This committee is composed of leading physicians and hygienists, officers of associations and institutions for human betterment, experts on various phases of health work, educators, clergymen and lawyers, and such unclassified members as Luther Burbank, Andrew Carnegie, Thomas A. Edison and President John Mitchell, of the United Mine Workers of America.

Hoping to accomplish its aims through a campaign of education, the committee has upward of 200,000 members working in clubs throughout the nation.

"Our plan," said Professor Fisher, "is through sub-committees to guide enthusiasm into a channel where it will, and where it can make itself felt on Congress to compel its members to see the importance of establishing a federal bureau of health and to give to the proper department ample authority—not only money—to carry on the work which we hope to promote."

In a series of experiments in dietetics on forty-nine persons, Professor Fisher has contrasted high and low proteid dietaries.

The results showed that a diet of low proteid character resulted in a greater degree of endurance; but this, he declares, must not be construed as a victory for vegetarianism over flesh eating.

Literally, the victory is to low producers of tissue over high producers of tissue. Athletes, college professors and other persons selected as being accustomed to the different kinds of fare under consideration were used in the experiments.

Three tests were used—holding the arms horizontally as long as possible, bending the knee deeply and raising the leg while lying on the back.

In the arm-holding contest, the abstainers from meat showed superiority—only two of the

fifteen flesh eaters could hold the arms out over a quarter of an hour, while twenty-two of the thirty-two abstainers surpassed that limit.

Nay, fifteen of them exceeded half an hour, nine of them an hour, four of them two hours and one of them three hours, while not one meat eater lasted a half hour!

In knee-bending, too, the abstainers from meat came out ahead.

Professor Fisher concludes that the difference in endurance is due to diet. Yet he refused to commit himself to a condemnation of flesh foods; he contented himself with saying that "the ordinary consumption of those foods is excessive."

And again: "The proper scientific attitude is to study the question of meat eating in precisely the same manner as one would study the question of bread eating."

He found that to suddenly cease meat eating often makes people ill, but that thorough mastication of the reduced quantity of meat usually obviates illness. Some persons, however, he found, may have an actual physiological need which no foods other than meat can satisfy.

That plenty of vegetables make one proof against cancer, and that red meat causes it, is the assertion made by Dr. Robert Bell, one of the prominent physicians of London.

Yet, in contrast to this, are some curious statistics recently adduced in Baden, Germany. During enrolment of recruits for the German army, out of 604 young men liable for service, only twenty met the physical requirements, and it was stated that the dearthness of meat probably accounted for the degeneration—that potatoes and skimmed milk would not make men physically fit.

That vegetarianism has increased in the United States one needs no better testimony than the growing number of "straight-edge" restaurants where only food "which never had a squeal in it" is served.

At such places popular dishes are: Fruit muffins, made of whole wheat flour in combination with dates; fig crisps, which are made of whole wheat flour, figs, filberts and honey, and walnut croquettes, pecan cake and fig hazel.

Does it, after all, make so much difference what or how we eat? This is what Dr. Harvey W. Wiley, chief chemist of the Department of Agriculture, has been seeking to learn for the government.

"Old age should be the only weapon left to the reaper Death," was the nation-startling statement made by Dr. Wiley a short time ago. "It's rank disgrace for any man to die under 100."

This man has for a number of years been conducting for the government important investigations regarding food and nourishment. His opinion as to what should constitute the ideal food is of peculiar value.

How, then, would he have us eat if we are to reach the centenary mark?

"Eat plenty of good, wholesome food," is the advice of Dr. Wiley.

How relieved the majority of persons must be to hear this. Here, at least, is one man of unquestioned authority—but there are others—who declares that we need not starve our stomachs in order to be well nourished. And he holds out other as comforting hopes to poor, diet-punished humanity.

Unlike many people who have studied the question of diet, Dr. Wiley doesn't attempt, indeed, refuses—to prescribe to others what they shall eat.

He contents himself with saying: "Eat plenty," and considers that the appetite may be safely trusted to be a guide.

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