

**The cause of blight and pestilence in the vegetable creation : with suggestions for the development of other supplies of food during the present crisis / by John Parkin.**

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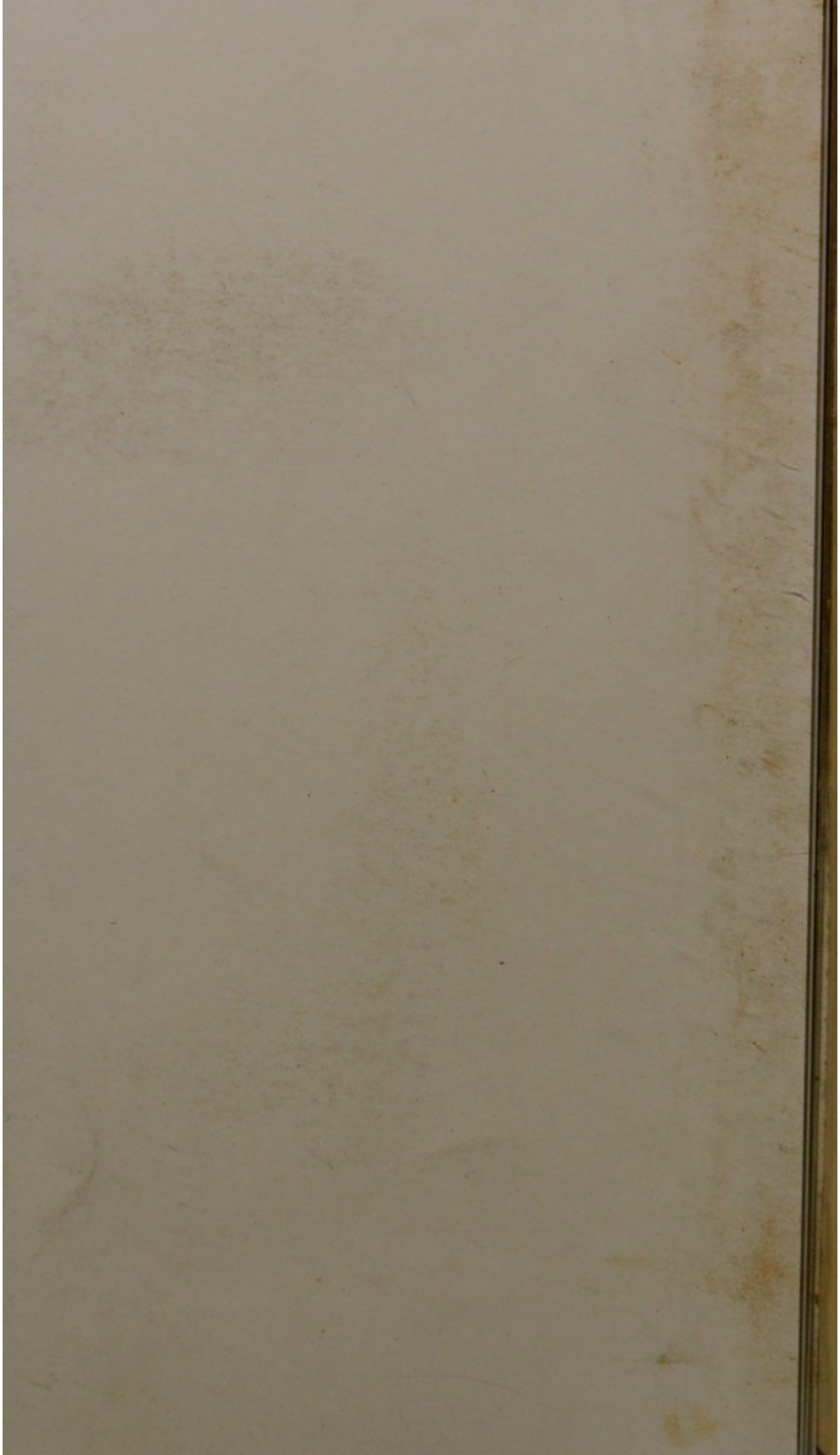
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THE CAUSE

OF

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IN THE

VEGETABLE CREATION;

WITH

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF OTHER  
SUPPLIES OF FOOD DURING THE  
PRESENT CRISIS.

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By JOHN PARKIN, M.D.

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ON THE

## CAUSE OF BLIGHT, ETC.

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THE general anxiety which exists, respecting the failure of the potato crop, and the importance of the subject to all classes of persons, induce me to adopt this mode of making known the opinions which I entertain, as to the cause of the failure, and of offering some suggestions in mitigation of the evil.

Were it not for one circumstance, I should not attempt to introduce individual opinions on such an occasion as the present, but it is impossible, unless we have clear ideas of the immediate cause of the pestilence, to apply an adequate remedy now, or to form any opinion as to the probability of future returns of this vegetable epidemic. That the potato malady is an epidemic, and that it is as deserving of this name as those pestilences which affect the human and brute creation, there can be, I think, little doubt. In fact, I would infer that the decay or destruction of vegetables, when witnessed over large tracts, or whole continents, is not only similar in character, but is also due to the same cause as that which produces disease and death in the animal creation. My reason for believing this is, that, at all epidemic periods, these different effects invariably follow or accompany each other. Thus, in the earliest record we have of pestilence, it is said that the plague of blotches and blains, the murrain of beasts, and the blight in corn, all visited Egypt in close succession. The same combination of circumstances, and the same order have been observed at all epidemic periods, particularly during the prevalence of the Black Death, of the 14th century. This will be evident by a reference to the chronicles of that period, as well as to the history of this disease, by Dr. Hecker, published some few years since.

The blights in the vegetable kingdom, which thus appeared, simultaneously with pestilence in the human race, could not be ascribed to mere accident; for not only did the former commence about the same time, and continue to re-appear until the termination of the latter, but these diseases in vegetables were sometimes as new as those which

appeared, at the same time, in man. Thus it has been stated, that the mildew, which attacked the wheat after the appearance of the black death in Europe, had never been known in France before that period. Although we have been told that potatoes were similarly affected 80 years since, I doubt much if this disease is not as new and as unknown, in the history of this plant, as is its cotemporary—the Epidemic Cholera—among men; for we have no record of such a malady having been before observed. If, therefore, pestilence in the animal and disease in the vegetable kingdom prevail, at the same time, and invariably accompany each other, we may reasonably infer that these different phenomena are produced by the same cause. At least, I shall assume, for the moment, that such is the fact, and proceed to show what I believe that cause to be.

In a work\* which I published some years since, an attempt was made to prove that epidemic diseases are produced by volcanic action; while, also, I argued that the diseases, or blights, in vegetables were effects of the same cause. That these diseases in the vegetable creation are produced by a cause beneath the surface, we might argue, independently of all other reasons, from the fact that they frequently spring up in some particular locality, where, previously, they were unknown, without our being able to account for the phenomenon by any alteration in the seasons, or change in the constituent elements of the soil; while they will continue to devastate the same, or other tracts for a long series of years, and during every variety of temperature, dryness, and moisture—in seasons apparently the most favourable, as well as in those which are supposed to be unfavourable. As illustrative of this view of the subject, I may remark that the first famine, of which we have any record, occurred in a country, which is the centre of a volcanic region—the boundaries of which have been so well and accurately defined by Lyell—while, also, I may add, that all the other phenomena which have been referred to in my work, and which I have attempted to trace to the same cause, were also observed in Egypt from this period until the departure of the Israelites.

Not only have I inferred, that blights in the vegetable and pestilence and murrain in the animal creation, are due to the operation of volcanic action; but I have also concluded, that the immediate cause of their production is the extrication of a gas from the interior to the exterior, and its diffusion in the surrounding atmosphere. It would be

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\* On the Remote Cause of Epidemic Diseases.—Hatchard and Son.

impossible, in this place, to state all the arguments that might be advanced in support of this conclusion; I must therefore refer those interested in the inquiry to my work, where this part of the subject has been fully discussed. I may add, however, that, with respect to the present inquiry, several facts have been recorded which tend to show, that the agent, productive of the blight in the potato, is present in the atmosphere; while other facts also prove that it cannot be generated, or generally diffused in this fluid—for otherwise the pestilence could not sweep over one part of a field and leave the remainder untouched, as has been noticed in many instances. The same phenomenon has been so invariably observed during the prevalence of human pestilences, that I have set it down as a law, common to these effects as well as all others produced by volcanic action.

With these preliminary remarks, made with the view of showing the basis upon which my conclusions are formed, I will now proceed to draw some practical deductions, which are necessary corollaries to the above hypothesis.

In the first place, if the theory now alluded to be true, we shall be forced to allow that no good can possibly result from the proposal that has lately been made, by many individuals, to change the seed; for the cause of the disease is not in the plant itself, or the root, but exists in the spot where the plant grows. As long, therefore, as this cause is in operation; and as long as any extrication of the same matter takes place from the interior to the surface; so long will the same effects be witnessed, while plants exist upon which the deleterious agent can exert its influence—for the stalk of one plant would be as susceptible of the morbid influence as that of another.

In the next place, we must conclude that the effects, now under consideration, will not be transitory, if they be produced by volcanic action; for we have proof that this process, when it commences in a particular spot or line of the earth's surface, continues in operation for long, and sometimes almost indefinite periods. On the other hand, we may also infer that blight, and the decay and destruction of the plants, will not be observed every year, but only at certain and irregular periods; for although volcanic action is itself continuous, the effects resulting from it, as witnessed on the earth's surface, are always transitory, while also they only recur at distant and irregular periods. But whatever theory may be adopted, in order to account for the production of epidemic, or general diseases in vegetables—whether this or any other—there can be no doubt that these particular affections in the vegetable

creation, like those in the animal, are observed again and again in the same spot, and among the same class of vegetables. This was particularly apparent during the pestilential period before referred to, and the same result has also been observed in other instances—in all, in fact, of which we have any record.

If these inferences be just, we must conclude that the cause productive of the disease, at present raging among the potatoes, will be again in operation in the next or subsequent years. It becomes, therefore, an important question to ascertain what course should be adopted, under these circumstances, in order to guard against future failures in so principal an article of diet in these countries. Were the disease confined in subsequent visitations, the same as in the present, to the potato, the best and only resource would appear to be to change the cultivation of this plant for some other,—particularly as more valuable substitutes could be found for what has been justly termed by Cobbett the lazy root of Ireland. What this substitute should be I do not pretend to point out at the present moment; it is sufficient to know that there are many substances, now cultivated, that would answer the intended purpose. Thus, in addition to wheat, oats, barley, beans and peas—the latter so extensively employed on the continent, and being at the same time so highly nutritious—there are the carrot, the parsnip, beet root, &c. which might be resorted to for filling up the vacuum thus produced, while they would be found more nourishing articles of diet than the potato. With these and a sufficient supply of animal food, our condition hereafter, so far from being a bad one, would be actually improved.

But then the question arises, will all these different articles of consumption be spared, or will the pestilence extend upwards in the scale of vegetable creation? This is a question that it is impossible for any one to resolve with certainty, although, reasoning from analogy and judging from the course which is pursued in the animal creation, we must conclude that such will probably be the case.—In man, this rule is invariably observed, as we have abundant evidence to show—for the fact that epidemics attack by classes, or grades, has not only been recorded by Pliny and other writers, but has been remarked during the prevalence of every pestilential disease, from that time to the present day. Although we have not the same data to go upon, in the one case as in the other, still, from the facts that have been recorded, we may reasonably infer that the same rule is observed in those pestilences that attack vegetables.—Thus, it is stated in the Book of Exodus, that, du-

ring one of the visitations of this kind in Egypt, the flax and the barley were smitten ; but the wheat and the rye were *not* smitten—although we know that, at other periods, the latter were attacked the same as the former. What was the order observed, during the prevalence of the black death of the 14th century, I have not ascertained, for historical writers seldom condescend to record such apparently insignificant details ; while, also, it should be remembered that vegetables were not then cultivated to the same extent as at present. All we know is, that the whole produce of the earth, including grain of every kind, was then attacked to as great, or a greater extent than the potato has been now. Thus wheat, at the commencement of this period and after the first failure which then occurred, was sold in England at 40s. the quarter, equivalent to 30*l.* sterling of our present money. This was not an isolated example, for, in 1347, wheat was so scarce in Europe, that the authorities were obliged to have recourse to a distribution of bread among the poor. In Florence (and the same course was adopted in other large cities) bakehouses were erected, from which 94,000 loaves of bread, of twelve ounces each, were dispensed daily. The same failure occurred, from time to time, during the whole of this pestilential period. In 1602-3 and 4, when famine was general in Europe, so scarce was food in Russia, that all the ties of nature and morality were disregarded ; not only did men devour each other, but human flesh was actually exposed for sale in the open market.

Not that I anticipate the same sad result now ; on the contrary, I feel convinced that, even if blight, or mildew, were to attack the wheat, the failure would not be so great, or so extensive as at the above period. I ground this opinion on the fact, that all the phenomena, connected with the present epidemic period, and which I have attempted to trace to the same source, are less in degree than those which occurred during the above pestilential epoch. Thus the intensity of the disease, or the mortality of the Epidemic Cholera ; the atmospheric phenomena ; the earthquakes, and other effects of volcanic action, have been less now than they were during the prevalence of the black death—as I have already pointed out, while detailing the histories of these two epidemics. But then it should be remembered that, in the present state of our population ; its increase ; and the comparative poverty of the working classes, a slight and partial failure, now, will be productive of as much misery as a great, or total failure in a particular crop, would probably have been then.—We ought therefore, it would seem, to take every precaution to guard against the evil that must necessarily arise from a return, or extension of the pestilence ;

for, independently of all theory and the opinions of individuals, we have, unfortunately, practical proof that disease has attacked one species of vegetables, to an extent not witnessed for some centuries; while the amount of misery which has already been produced, by this failure in a single crop, point out the sad consequences that would ensue from a more general and extensive blight, either in the same, or other plants, but more particularly in the different varieties of grain.

Why the potato has been the first and, up to the present time, the only esculent that has been attacked, is a subject well worthy of consideration. I would myself ascribe it to two circumstances, one of which is the size of the haulm, and the other the organization and texture of the stalk and root: causing, in the former, a large extent of surface to be exposed to the influence of the atmosphere, and any deleterious agent contained therein; and, in the latter, a predisposition or susceptibility to take on diseased action from this, or any other morbid cause.—Like human pestilences, therefore, which first attack those who are the most predisposed—or the weak and the sickly—we may conclude that the morbid cause, thus brought into operation, has produced its primary effect on the potato, as the weakest, or the most susceptible, of the class of vegetables resorted to by man, in this part of the world. But it is not likely that the analogy will end here, for as, in similar diseases in man, those classes which at first escaped are invariably attacked afterwards, we may reasonably infer, after the examples which have been given, that the same rule will be observed with the pestilence that has now attacked the vegetable creation.

We will therefore presume, for the sake of argument, that the blight, or mildew, attacked the wheat and other grains, as well as vegetables, and then ask where we are to look for a supply equal to the demand that will then arise? Not I fear to those granaries where we should find an abundant and ready supply under other circumstances; for—as the cause, which is now producing such havoc among the potatoes, has been in operation in Belgium, France, Germany, and America—we have a right to presume, that, if this cause should produce a continuation of the same, or other effects in England, a similar result will follow in the above countries.—If so, all our usual and best sources of supply would be cut off altogether; and there are no others, that I am aware of, which would be able to fill up the vacuum produced by an extensive failure of the grain crops in Europe and America. To what then should we be able to resort, under these circumstances? To vegetables and animal food? These, I fear,

would not give a sufficient supply even for a single year ; not only because we have not, at present, a sufficient quantity to enable the majority of the poorer classes to obtain meat daily, as a portion of their food, but also because we cannot say that even our present supply will be continued—for murrain in cattle has always accompanied pestilence in man and vegetables.—This was particularly apparent during the prevalence of the black death, when, as we are informed, 5,000 sheep died in one pasture alone. What has been the case in other countries, at the present period, I know not, but, in England, disease has not only been raging among the cattle, for some time, to an alarming extent, but seems now to be on the increase. In Glasgow *two* cow-feeders have lost, between them, 500 cows within six months ; and in the surrounding districts of Lanarkshire, Dumbartonshire, and Renfrewshire, the mortality has been so great that some *byres* have been entirely cleared out. The same remarks will apply to a great many counties, or districts, in England and Wales. Should this murrain continue, therefore, and should the disease in the vegetable creation walk hand in hand with that in the animal, what will then be our position ? One that it would be fearful to contemplate, unless we should discover some means of warding off the evil by human foresight and human skill. Such a result was once obtained by divine interposition, when Joseph, by interpreting Pharoah's dream, was the means, in the hands of Providence, of saving the Egyptians from the horrors of a long continued famine. But, in the present day, when knowledge and science have made such rapid progress, the necessity for miraculous intervention has been done away with. Man, therefore, is left to his own unaided efforts, and he will generally find these sufficient, if he would apply them with resolution and judgment. Had it not been from a full persuasion of the truth of this conclusion, I should not have entered into the preceding argument, or have attempted to draw so melancholy a picture of former woes and previous dearths ; nor have even hinted at the possible recurrence of such evils.—Believing, however, that we have it in our power to guard against the contingency, to a certain extent, I have hesitated the less to proclaim the important and unwelcome truth, in order that, by knowing the extent of our danger, we may seek, while there are yet time and means at our disposal, for some adequate remedy.

Of course, I put out of the question, altogether, those means which may hereafter be found sufficient for the removal of the disease, after it has once been produced, in animals or vegetables ; for, although I believe that much may be done in this respect, and although it is my

intention to offer some suggestions of the kind at another time and in another place, it should not be forgotten, that such remedies can only succeed to a partial and limited extent—while also the cost may prevent their adoption altogether. What we require is the means of making good the deficiency in the animal and vegetable creation, by the supply of the same, or other articles of consumption, drawn from some other source. But where are we to find these, if all the sources which have been enumerated fail us? If the earth refuses to yield its accustomed produce, and if the cattle die, or are diminished in number, there is yet another field open to us and another class of organized beings, created for man by an all wise and beneficent Providence, from which we can derive both food and nourishment—I mean the waters of the ocean, and the fish of the sea. We are, it is true, already accustomed to draw from this source a certain supply of food; but then this supply is so small that, with the exception of herrings and mackerel, it may be said the majority of the inhabitants of these islands are strangers to the use of fish. And yet with the advantages we possess, from our insular position, there is no reason why it should not become a constant and daily appendage to the poor man's meal, instead of being, as is now the case, an article of luxury for the rich and the affluent. In fact, if we regard the extent of the ocean and consider the countless myriads of inhabitants which it contains, the majority of them fitted for the sustenance of man; it would seem, that we have only to stretch forth our hands and to draw, from this source, without previous toil or labour and independently of seasons and other causes that affect the fruits of the earth, a constant and never failing supply of wholesome and invigorating food. Not that the beings which inhabit the deep, entirely escape the causes which produce pestilence on land; for we have proof that, during pestilential periods, fish become diseased and die, as I have before pointed out in another place. But the extent of the evil is always much less among this class of beings, than among the inhabitants of the earth, and is then observed principally in confined situations, such as ponds, lakes, and rivers. When, however, the same result occurs among the fish of the sea, it is confined to particular latitudes; certain portions of the coast, or particular bays; and among those species that are not migratory, or which remain for a long portion of the year in the same locality. The reason of this will be readily understood, by a reference to the theory that has been broached by me; for as I have endeavoured to show that the cause productive of all these various effects, is either confined to particular lines of the earth's surface, or certain localities, it will be evi-

dent that beings which are not stationary, will be less liable to be attacked than those which remain constantly in the same infected spot—even if we allow that various substances, injurious to animal life, are given out beneath the waters of the ocean, as well as from the surface of the earth. It is also more than probable, that the instinct of fish, like the instinct of the fowls of the air, may cause them to desert an infected spot: for it is a well known fact, and has been recorded by various writers, that birds of prey, during the prevalence of severe and extensive pestilences, invariably forsake an infected town, or country.—They thus escape the danger to which man, tame and domestic animals, plants, trees, and vegetables are so frequently exposed, and from which they so constantly suffer.

In proof of the justness of this conclusion, I may mention that we have not heard, during the present pestilential period—which began in 1832, and has continued up to the present time—of the fish in the sea being affected; although several instances have been recorded of fresh water fish dying, during the first years of the appearance of the Epidemic Cholera. I will therefore take it for granted, that this source of supply will not fail us in the hour of need, and proceed to offer a few additional arguments for resorting to it at once and without the least delay.

Turning to Ireland—for the same amount of destitution has not, fortunately, extended to England—we have here the means of applying an immediate remedy for a part of the evil under which this country unhappily labours. In the first place, as men now idle must be employed; in some way or other; and as money must be raised to pay them with; it is probable that in no other channel could labour be employed, or capital be invested, with the same benefit and the same amount of profit. Although unable to employ all the destitute in this particular branch, it would, nevertheless, give employment to a vast number; for if the herring fishery on the coast of Scotland absorbed, as has been stated, 100,000 men, double the number might find employment on the coasts of Ireland. But it is not so much the number of hands that would be employed, as the amount of food that might be furnished, which we have to look to at the present moment; for this is, after all, the problem that requires to be solved. If, therefore, instead of employing men in what is called improvements, but which, in the majority of instances, might be termed useless alterations, and then sending to other countries for food, purchased at a high price, to feed them with, the same money were laid out in the purchase of vessels, and the same hands were em-

ployed in searching for the hidden treasures of the deep, not only would these individuals obtain food for themselves and families, but for thousands and tens of thousands of their fellow countrymen.

Not that it is my wish to draw labour from the soil ; on the contrary, I think it not only desirable, but absolutely necessary that, in addition to the lands at present in cultivation, every acre of waste land, capable of cultivation, should also be made productive. It is in fact clear that, if we are to have failures in the crops hereafter, more land should be put into cultivation in order to make good the deficiency, as far as it is possible, by this means. But then it must be remembered that the supply from this source will be limited, particularly for some few years ; while, also, it would be liable to the same blights and the same failures as the crops from the lands at present in cultivation. In addition to what will be required for these waste lands, it has been calculated that, if carrots were substituted for potatoes, as many persons have proposed, 1716 tons of seed would be required for Ireland alone. Such quantities are, of course, not procurable ; for the European seed market, as the editor of the *Gardener's Chronicle* justly remarks, is only supplied with what suffices for ordinary consumption. Although this difficulty, in the event of a necessity arising next year to discontinue the cultivation of the potato, would be lessened by the selection of half a dozen substitutes, it would not be entirely obviated, for we should not, even then, be able to obtain a supply equal to the demand—supposing that we had the means of purchasing the requisite quantity.—As, therefore, the introduction of other esculents for the potato must be a work of time, and as, after the failure which has now occurred, the cultivation of this root will necessarily be limited, the different varieties of grain must be had recourse to, as substitutes, in the first instance. This, therefore, added to the demand which already exists from the loss in the potato crop, will enhance the price of grain, not only this year but for some years to come, even supposing that we have no subsequent failure. If, however, blight should again attack this root, as well as vegetables and grains of all kind, we may then be unable to obtain a sufficient quantity of seed for the lands at present in cultivation—much more those waste ones that may hereafter be brought into cultivation.

Believing that sufficient has been advanced to show the impolicy of placing our dependence entirely on the produce of the earth, for our future sustenance, I may now leave this question to the decision and judgment of those to whom the subject more properly belongs—the

public at large. The nature of my investigations having put me in possession of those facts which appeared to bear on the present inquiry, I have been induced to make those facts public, and to state, with some hesitation, the deductions which a consideration of them has made on my mind. But here the duty of the physician ends, and that of the philanthropist, the statesman, and the politician commences. To these individuals, I may leave the onerous task of carrying out this suggestion—should it be deemed a desirable one, and sufficient for the evil now affecting masses of the population—confining myself, as is my peculiar and privileged province, to those evils which affect individuals.

There are, however, a few remarks which I would wish to offer, as to the probable cause of the small supply and consumption of fish in this country ; in order that any attempt which may be made to alter this state of things, shall be directed in the proper channel. I am inclined to believe, that this apparent anomaly is to be referred not only to the smallness of the supply, but, also, to the irregularity of its delivery, and the consequent variation in price. This irregularity— independently of the fact that fish cannot be caught at all times as easily as a drove of cattle, or a flock of sheep—I would ascribe chiefly to the circumstance, that the different vessels engaged in this trade belong to different owners ; so that each leaves the fishing ground when it has obtained a cargo, and proceeds to its destined market. Hence it frequently happens that all, or nearly all, the vessels arrive at the same time ; causing a glut in the market at the moment, and, as a consequence, a subsequent scarcity until vessels arrive again, when, possibly, the same result occurs. There is, therefore, a loss both to the owners and the public—to the former, by the depreciation of price *in the wholesale market*, and to the latter by the spoiling of the fish, before this sudden and increased quantity can be disposed of in new channels and to fresh customers. If, however, the vessels were dispatched from the different stations by turns, and daily, with the quantity of fish caught in the whole fleet, not only would the supply be regular, but the price also could not vary as at present—particularly if a steamer were employed to carry the fish to market instead of a sailing vessel.

But these desirable results will never, perhaps, be witnessed, unless the plan is adopted by a public body,—for we could not expect a combination among private individuals for such a purpose, as jealousy and rivalry would always interfere to prevent it. Another reason why a public body, or a company, should be formed, is the fact that, in all

probability, new fishing grounds will be required, and that some of these may be placed beyond the reach of private enterprise, and individual means. If also we consider that an increased and immediate supply is required, from this source, to meet the evil which now afflicts Ireland, and that a large capital will be necessary to fit out a sufficient number of vessels; a company would seem to offer the best, if not the only means of effecting these objects. Should these deductions be allowed, and should the suggestion now made be considered a proper one, there would be, I should imagine, no difficulty in forming a company, as the advantages to the subscribers would not be less than the benefit to the public, for immense profits have always been derived from this trade. It has been stated by one writer,\* that the Dutch formerly realized £3,000,000 annually, in the herring fishery alone, on the coast of Scotland. It was, in fact, from the profits of this trade that a poor village became converted into a splendid city; for Amsterdam, as the Dutch historians proudly boast, was founded on the bones of herrings. It was also from the sale of fish caught on the coast of Scotland, that the Dutch were enabled to purchase, of the Scotch themselves, the principal part of the granite of which their buildings are composed. I can therefore appeal, on the present occasion, not only to the humanity but to the interests of the British public; or, at least, that portion of it which would, no doubt, be ready to subscribe their money to an undertaking like the present, and for the objects now contemplated—provided they thought that the aid thus afforded would not be entirely lost, or unattended with future benefit. That the plan itself would be desirable under any circumstances—even supposing that the calamities which we have now been considering should never arise—there can be little doubt; for an abundant and regular supply of fish would enable the poor man to add to his potato, or morsel of bread, a wholesome and nutritious article of diet, which he is now unable to do, even in years of plenty. If, also, the supply were greater and the price lessened, the demand which would then arise from the millions who now seldom taste animal food, must ensure an ample return for any amount of capital that may be invested in the undertaking. It would, of course, be immaterial in what way the suggestion were carried out, provided the object now contemplated—an increased and abundant supply of fish—was obtained. I have, however, given the reasons why I think this end will never be gained by private enterprise alone, in time sufficient to relieve the present neces-

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\* Vide Frazer's Magazine —Sept., 1846.

sities of our poorer brethren. As also those great undertakings which, in other countries, are usually the work of government, here naturally fall into the hands of a public body, or company, I have excluded altogether from my view, while considering this subject, the government of this country. As, however, time is an object, and the occasion not only unusual, but as important to the government as to individuals, there is no reason why aid should not be afforded to the measure, by Her Majesty's ministers—not by loans, or money, for this I think would be quite unnecessary, but in vessels and men, which, if lent for a short time, until vessels could be built and the new hands instructed in their craft, would be more valuable, perhaps, than money itself.

As, also, it is not a question of mere investment—or whether this mode or any other would give the best return for the capital employed—but one in which every individual has some stake; I indulge the hope that those who might not think of embarking their money in an ordinary speculation, would not hesitate to support such an undertaking as this. Although far from wishing to become an alarmist, and although I feel assured that the same amount of physical suffering and distress, as has been experienced at former periods, will not be felt at this—for the reasons before stated—still, a return of the present pestilence in the vegetable creation must affect, to a greater or less extent, the pecuniary interests of all classes of persons—of those even who now think themselves placed beyond the reach of such causes as these. When, also we consider the possibility of a recurrence of those evils which are now passing before our eyes in Ireland, and their extension to this country, in the event of future dearths or famines; and weigh the consequences that may then ensue; not only the embarrassment of the government, but the supervention of a train of social evils that would go far to disorganize society itself, it must be unnecessary to use another argument, or to add another word. In the hands, therefore, of those whose interests—their best and dearest interests possibly—are thus likely to be affected, I will leave the present question; in the hope and expectation that the suggestion will receive that consideration, which the importance of the subject would seem to demand. Obtaining this, I shall have accomplished my sole object in entering into this inquiry.

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