

## 10. Dietary Reformers

Apart from religious and ethical supporters of vegetarianism, many from the medical field were also opposed to Australia's huge meat consumption. From 1875, there was an Australian Health Society, the members of which were all medical professionals. The aim of the Society was to promote preventative medicine through better sanitation, exercise and healthy eating. While the Society was not a vegetarian one, it did share lectures and other activities involving diet with the Vegetarian Society when it was active.

One of the areas of mutual agreement was that meat was a legitimate health concern. Up until the early 20th century, health inspectors examined animals and their flesh meant for export but not those meant for domestic consumption. Prior to the health checks we have now, Bovine Tuberculosis was endemic to Australian cattle and so the disease was frequently spread onto humans. Adulteration and bad storage combined with Australia's hot climate were other factors, which made consumption of animal flesh dangerous.

Dr Philip Muskett was a medical reformer who spoke with some authority as a former surgeon superintendent to the New South Wales government. Muskett was not a vegetarian, and was always at pains to make this plain so as not to appear part of any 'crank' movement. Nevertheless, he did constantly criticise the amount of meat being eaten in Australian homes. As he says in the introduction to his first major work on the subject:

“We in Australia habitually consume an injurious amount of meat to the exclusion of far more needed nourishment. The golden rule as far as the Australian dietary is concerned is a minimum of meat, and a relatively maximum of the other classes of food.”<sup>1</sup>

However, *The Bulletin*, no respecter of medical or other dissenting opinion, sought to deride him and his views:

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<sup>1</sup> Muskett, Philip E., *The art of living in Australia ; together with three hundred Australian cookery recipes and accessory kitchen information* by Mrs. H. Wicken, London, Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1893, p.4 (<http://setis.library.usyd.edu.au/ozlit/pdf/p00022.pdf>)

“Dr. Muskett, of Sydney, declares roundly that an Australian annually eats as much meat as two Englishmen, three Canadians, four Germans, or ten Italians; hence he says, the general noticeable drop in average health in Australia. The alleged ‘general noticeable drop’ in average health is proved by the fact that the Australian birth-rate is one of the highest in the world, and the Australian death-rate is about the lowest in the world statistically recorded. The ill-health which makes the average Australian live considerably longer than the average Britisher, or Frenchman, or German, is a remarkable circumstance.”<sup>2</sup>

Muskett’s prescription for Australia’s dietary health - as outlined in his book *The Art of Living in Australia* and his later work, the *Book of Diet* (1898) - advised a Mediterranean diet as more in keeping with our hot climate. He emphasised the benefits of salads and the drinking of wine instead of tea but, unfortunately for vegetarians (and fish), he also urged Australians to eat more seafood.

Muskett claimed that a major part of the problem with the Australian diet was that it lacked variety, being limited in fresh fruits and vegetables. To little avail he urged the NSW authorities to support the growing of vegetables where possible and for the introduction of various plant foods such as sweet corn. As he said:

“If the potato and cabbage were taken away, Australia would be almost bereft of vegetables.”

Vegetarians trying to keep to their diets and remain healthy echoed his view of the paucity of choice and price of fruit and vegetables. William Chidley noted in the 1860s and 1870s that fruit and vegetables were often out of his parent’s price range. When money was short his vegetarian family had to survive on potatoes, bread and syrup. In the 1890s Ellen White complained that fruit, vegetables, grains, and nuts were neither easy to obtain nor affordable in Australia. Even up to the middle of the 20th century, visitors to and residents of Australia were still complaining about the cost and lack of variety of vegetarian foods. In fact, it was not until the post Second World War influx of immigrants from southern Europe that a fully Mediterranean diet as recommended by Muskett was really achievable.

While there have always been a proportionally large number of German vegetarians, very few seem to have played a role in Australian vegetarian life. One notable exception was Dr Otto

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<sup>2</sup> The Bulletin, vol.18 21 August 1897, p.21.

Abramowski (1852-1910), a medical doctor trained in Berlin who after spending eight years as a surgeon in the Prussian and German Army, including service in the Franco-Prussian War, immigrated to Australia in 1884. Abramowski first settled in the railway town of Terowie, South Australia, until in 1888 he heard that the Chaffey Brothers were starting an irrigation colony in Mildura for the growing of fruit. He immediately bought a plot of land and headed out there.

Abramowski quickly became a leading member to the then small community, as its doctor, advisor on town sanitation and the director of its first hospital. Finding that the citizens of Mildura were actually quite healthy by Australian standards, his medical skills were not too much in need, so he also ran his own dispensary catering for both allopathic and homeopathic patients, and wrote and studied in his field. He also found time to establish a small vegetable farm, specialising in growing artichokes as well as keeping bees.

Even before his arrival in Mildura, Abramowski had started sending articles giving medical and social advice to the local paper the *Mildura Cultivator*. This newspaper, which served the residents of the Irrigation Colony, clearly had a good number of fruit and vegetable growers among its readership who were keen to hear of a diet that promoted their crops. It also from 1890 had the vegetarian, John Newton Wood, on its editorial staff who was always keen to add any vegetarian information to the publication. From his many articles over the years, Abramowski eventually compiled a book entitled, *Eating for health: the evolution of a commonsense conception of disease and a natural system of its prevention and cure* (1907). Seeing the commercial possibilities of diet books, the Melbourne publisher, E. W. Cole, picked it up in 1908 and republished it twice with the catchier title, *Vitalism: the art of eating for health*.

Abramowski reported in his columns his studies into why it was that humans and domesticated animals were so prone to diseases while animals living in a 'natural state' were not. He, himself, was overweight and in poor health and after experimenting on himself he systematically eliminated various foods that he thought harmful until he was essentially on a healthy vegetarian diet.

Abramowski became convinced that meat was the prime cause of illness, and so advised against its daily consumption. As can be seen from his description of beef tea variants, which were then the most popular remedy for a multitude of illnesses:

“The celebrated Bovril, the beef tea, the soup, bouillon, gravy, etc; poisonous materials all, although they are even at the present day considered nourishing, and often prescribed by the

medical men; decoctions which in their chemical composition have a surprising similarity to the urine of the respective animals.”<sup>3</sup>

Although he warned others off meat, he himself stopped short of total abstinence, saying, “I do without it altogether, although we usually have some on a Sunday as a special indulgence.”

Abramowski is still known today mainly for his work in support of the raw food diet and Fruitarianism. His books on the subject, particularly *Fruitarian diet and physical rejuvenation* have been republished a number of times over the years both in Australia and overseas and is still available today. Abramowski believed the diet was particularly beneficial for invalids and reported that he used the diet during a typhoid outbreak in 1908 whilst he was senior physician at the Mildura district hospital. Putting some patients on a diet solely of fruit and leaving the others to the traditional Australian meat diet, he found the fruit eating group had a much greater recovery rate.

After Abramowski’s death at the young age of 59, there were many letters in vegetarian and other journals discussing his untimely demise with speculation as to whether a fruitarian diet was to blame. The letters finally prompted his wife to write to the *Herald of the Golden Age* (the letter also being reprinted elsewhere) stating that the prime cause of his death was his loss of will to live brought about by his financial woes after the failure of his sanitarium in Coronet Hill (Vic.) and his dietary experiments which apparently included "introducing poisons and disease germs of all kinds”.

In Europe and America between the 1880s and 1930s, for publicity purposes vegetarian organisations often arranged sporting competitions such as long-distance bicycle or running races in which vegetarians could compete against meat eaters to promote their diet as being healthier than a meat-based one. While events like these were not held in Australia, one of the more outlandish examples of this sort of endurance activity was organised by John McDonagh, a Sydney doctor. McDonagh arranged for a fit young Swedish vegetarian immigrant by the name of Jacques Ibbot to hold a public forty-day fast to prove the efficacy of the vegetarian diet. The fast was held from October 25 to December 4, 1890, at the Bondi Aquarium - then a popular amusement park above Tamarama Beach.

As Ibbot was displayed lying on a couch in the park he gained a certain amount of notoriety - so much so that on a bank holiday during his fast he had to be protected from the crowds of over-

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3 Abramowski, O.L.M., *Vitalism: the Art of Eating for Health*, Melbourne, E. W. Cole, 1908, p.77-78

enthusiastic onlookers. Ibbot completed the fast successfully and triumphantly announced to the waiting reporters, “I attribute all my success to my long-continued diet upon fruit and vegetables and pure water.”<sup>4</sup>

However, Dr McDonagh’s motivation for the event seems to have been less to promote vegetarianism and more to promote a ‘medicinal extract’ called ‘Kolah-Bah-Natton’, derived from a type of African nut and which he claimed was rich in caffeine and theobromine.

A later publicity minded vegetarian was a man called Paul Anderson, a bodybuilder and professional strongman who also ran his own gymnasium. During the 1940s and 1950s under the stage name ‘The Young Mighty Apollo’ he made a living performing feats of strength, such as pulling trucks with his teeth or having cars driven over him. Up until the 1970s he also had a column giving bodybuilding and exercise advice in the vegetarian journal *Health and Vision*.

Another, interesting promoter of the benefits of a vegetable-based diet was Dr Alan Carroll (1828-1911). Born in London with the name Samuel Matthias Curl, he arrived in Sydney in 1887 after a 25-year career as a doctor in New Zealand. In Australia, he took the assumed name of Carroll, as he had left New Zealand in order to elope with a lady named Mary Douglas.

He said he had come to Australia from England ostensibly as an anthropologist to study the Australian Aborigines – however he stayed and instead became a leading figure in the fields of anthropology, nutrition and in his own specialisation - children’s health. He was for a time also a prominent Theosophist, as well as being a man of more prosaic science. He was the founder of the Australasian Anthropological Society and edited its journal, *The Science of Man*.

Carroll is now most widely known for his paediatric work and as the founder in 1894 of the Child Study Association, a charitable body aiming to reduce the high child mortality rate, particularly among the poor. The Association gave out free health and dietary advice, among other assistance, to poor families from its clinic in Sydney and proved extremely popular. Carroll’s theories on health - especially children’s nutrition - were widely acknowledged and, amazingly for a vegetarian advocate, he even had support from *The Worker* and the *Bulletin*.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> The 40 Day Fast, Daily Telegraph, Sydney, 5 Dec. 1890, p.3

<sup>5</sup> The Worker in the 1920s even reprinted the main work of Carroll : Izet, Mrs D, Health h & longevity according to the theories of the late Dr. Alan Carroll, with an account of the work of the Child Study Association, Sydney, Epworth, 1915

Carroll's dietary advice to families contained many facets, but he mainly championed the benefits of fresh cow's milk and wholemeal bread. So popular was his promotion of these foods that bakers and dairymen throughout Sydney began to advertise that they produced products conforming to his advice. For many years advertisements for Child Study Bread and Child Study Milk could be seen both in Sydney and wider NSW. The Child Study Health Food Company was still in evidence in the pages of the *Australian Vegetarian* in the 1950s.

Carroll believed that if a basically vegetarian - and therefore healthier diet than that commonly eaten by Australians - was given to babies and young children, it would improve their general health, assist the sick and lengthen their lives. He also held the now commonly acknowledged view that a diet high in sugar and fat and lacking the essential nutrients from fruit and vegetables, adversely affected children's mental development, character and behaviour.

In his written works Carroll stated that red meat should always be avoided, emphasising the Mosaic belief that the eating of meat that contained blood was wrong - injurious to adults and according to him a 'loathsome outrage' if fed to children. Although he himself was vegetarian, he did sometimes advise eating fish as a replacement for red meat.

Carroll was also a strong believer in eugenics, a belief which was to become very fashionable as the early 20th century progressed. He believed that Australians were declining as a race because of their bad diet and breeding. His theories on child welfare and diet were attempted later to be put into practice by Dr Richard Arthur, President of the NSW Eugenics Education Society and later Minister for Public Health in the Bavin Government (1927-1930).

Arthur was another British migrant who had settled in Sydney in 1891. He started a medical practice at Mosman, and was later medical officer or director of the Sydney, Royal North Shore and Royal Prince Alfred Hospitals. He was also from 1904 until 1932 a Liberal and later Independent member in the NSW state parliament. His main interest in medicine was the welfare of women and the young. He was a leading member of the puritan White Cross League and wrote extensively on the perceived dangers of masturbation, sex outside of marriage and the real dangers then of venereal disease.

It has been reported that Arthur was also a vegetarian, but this cannot be verified. It is known that he supported William Chidley in his linkage of a meat diet with sex, and as a believer in sexual abstinence it is presumed he also abstained from meat to control his desires. Arthur was also a strong temperance advocate and a promoter of fruit and milk as the best foods. During his Ministership he brought about the Milk Act of 1931, which brought into being the Milk Board to ensure the quality of milk for consumers in NSW.

In 1942, the Minister for War, Francis Forde, opened the first vegetarian children's home, Hopewood House, in Bowral, NSW. It was founded - and primarily funded - by Leslie Owen Bailey (1890-1964) a philanthropist who had made his fortune from his chain of dress shops called *Chic Salon*.

Bailey first became aware of the benefits of natural foods from the book, *The Fast Way to Health*, by Dr Frank McCoy. He had been in varying stages of ill-health for most of his 42 years and received immediate benefits after going on a vegetarian diet and ceasing to use pharmaceutical medicines. He became a convinced and impassioned supporter of natural health. From his reading of McCoy - as well as from his later research on diet and its benefits to health (including the works of Carroll) - Bailey developed his own theories of natural health and diet.

Bailey promoted vegetarianism by giving talks on natural health which, as an established businessman, he could do without fear of being labelled a crank. He founded the Hopewood home where his vision was to create a set of 'perfect' Australians who would prove his dietary and medical theories, as well the benefits of eugenic intervention in the betterment of the human race. In 1960, Bailey also founded *Hopewood Health Centre* in Wallacia (just outside of Sydney) and the Natural Health Society of Australia to promote his ideas for the future. Both still operate today and retain links with the Australian vegetarian community.

*Hopewood House* initially housed 86, mostly illegitimate, infants (43 girls and 43 boys) whose mothers could not look after them and many of whose fathers were abroad fighting in the armed forces. For an institution to carry out a social experiment like this was unprecedented - and certainly would not have been allowed by modern authorities - but the massive increase in numbers of illegitimate children caused by the wartime disruption of normal civilian life meant that many babies were without carers.

The Hopewood diet - for which the home became famous - consisted of fruits and vegetables, nuts, wholemeal bread and unpasteurised milk. Much of the fruit and vegetables were grown in Hopewood's own extensive grounds using organic farming methods. The children soon became known for being the healthiest in Australia. Researchers from around the world began to study them. Dentists marvelled at their complete absence of dental carries while doctors were equally astonished by their lack of colds and other common maladies that afflicted the general population.

In spite of the children's superior health, the NSW Child Welfare Department insisted - in the face of all contrary evidence - that the children were not receiving a correct diet. In the Department's opinion the normal Australian diet of meat three times a day cooked in as much fat as possible was what was required for growing children. As the Department had legal

responsibility for the children, Bailey was forced to introduce meat into the children's diet. However, when meat was placed before them, most of the children apparently refused to eat it and those who did soon found themselves losing weight rather than gaining it and suffering from colds for the first time. Seeing that meat - as he had expected - was harming the children in his care, Bailey again dropped it from their diet, although by this stage he had the support of nutritionists from Sydney University who had proved that the children's diet was superior to that of the normal Australian meat-based diet of the time.<sup>6</sup>

Like Carroll, Bailey's choice of a vegetarian diet was solely based on health grounds. Publicly at least, he never expressed any ethical reason for maintaining the diet. When promoting a natural health diet he had no qualms about promoting white meats as being 'healthy' and at times gave the children under his care cod liver oil.

Apart from Bailey and Carroll there were other moves to incorporate better and vegetarian food into children's diets in Australia. One successfully incorporated idea which had originated as a special meal for poor children in Norway was the 'Oslo lunch'. This lunch consisted of salad, wholemeal bread, cow's milk and fruit. It was introduced into Victorian state schools after a successful trial in 1940 and by the health reformer Dr Eleanor Stang into Western Australian schools when she was the state supervisor of infant health. By the 1950s the lunch was available to children in schools across most states, however many schools unfortunately decided to add meat into the salad sandwich.

In the 1930s, there was a huge increase in public interest in the vegetarian diet. This was not due however, to a sudden interest in animal welfare, but the result of a slow but steady growth in the 'body culture movement'. This movement, which worshipped above all the body beautiful, brought together health, fitness, naturism and eugenics into a unified lifestyle theory. Primarily begun in Germany (where it was known as the Freikorperkultur), the movement had been active in Australia since the turn of the century but only in the 1920s and 1930s did it come to widespread public prominence.

Not all of its supporters were vegetarian, though many were, and those who were not still advocated a healthier diet with less meat consumption. There were a number of eugenicist organisations such as the Racial Hygiene Association and the Eugenics Society formed in Australia, which promoted healthy eating through their activities and publications. These groups

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<sup>6</sup> See Candy, Raymond, *The Hopewood Story : A Gift of Health*, Pythagorean Press, 1987 as well as Trop, Jack Dunn, *A Gift of Love : the Hopewood Story*, Sydney, West Publishing Corporation, 1971. and Liddell, Rodney, *Children of Destiny*, Redbank, Qld., Liddell, 2000

all believed that a better diet would create a better race of strong, active and also physically attractive Australians. There were also prominent individuals such as the Melbourne dentist George Philpots who in the 1920s gave lectures across Australia and wrote on diet and health and was particularly keen on promoting vegetarian food alternatives (acting for the most part as a promoter of the Sanitarium range of foods). He also started a branch of the British organisation, the Food Education Society, in Victoria. Not all believers in eugenics were, as many would imagine, fascists, the movement in fact caught up many from across the political spectrum, including a number of Labor supporters and Communists such as Jack Lindsay.

The naturist aspects of the movement brought into being a number of naturist camps across Australia from the 1920s onwards, but none of these can be definitely shown to have been vegetarian orientated. However, the Vegetarian Health Camp, operating in the bush at Narrabeen near Sydney and run by William Edgar Roberts the founder of the Vegetarian Society of 1948, served as a naturist camp as well as a more traditional health resort. Roberts advertised that his camp offered 'sun and air bathing', terms which were then widely used to mean naturism. And as the photographic plates of Roberts' health books such as *The key to health : via exercise, diet, breathing, sun, air & water bathing, physiology* show, he was not at all adverse to nudity.

There was a good deal of vegetarian promotion in the range of naturist journals that were available in Australia, although most of these were published overseas and so don't provide any particularly Australian insight. Most naturist clubs in Australia were self-catered – as such there appeared little need to impose rules or strictures on diet. In 1965, however it seems that a traditional naturist club, catering primarily for vegetarians, was formed in Lane Cove, Sydney.<sup>7</sup>

The growth in the number of healthy eating disciples, during the 1920s and 30s can be seen by the explosive growth in sales of health foods and the large number of popular books and magazines on health, fitness, diet and natural health philosophies.

Among Australia's alternative and natural therapists there were a number of vegetarian advocates. Among those directly involved in the Vegetarian Society were the previously mentioned William Edgar Roberts, and Madame Mira Louise (James) who was a naturopath active from the 1930s in Adelaide and Perth. She wrote and published over 20 books and pamphlets on vegetarianism, naturopathy and anti-vaccination between 1939 and 1969. She ran her own health centre and was also for a time President of the Australian Vegetarian Society.

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<sup>7</sup> Clarke, Magnus, *Nudism in Australia : a first study*, Melbourne, Deakin University Press, 1982

In the 1940s, the Naturopath Dr Paul Maurice Koonin, a Russian émigré trained at the Kharkov University ran a clinic called Hygeia, where patients could stay and receive a healthy vegetarian raw food diet. With his wife, he also ran a practice in Macquarie St., Sydney, as well as publishing 11 works promoting a vegetarian diet, with such titles as *Soy beans : the wonder food* (1941) and *Food or drugs* (1940).

The most successful of the naturopaths was probably Frederick George Roberts (1892-1977) who became a highly successful self-declared naturopath, osteopath, dietitian, psychologist and iridiagnostician. Roberts, was introduced early to vegetarianism as he was brought up in a Seventh-day Adventist family in Tasmania. He seems to have left the Church as an adult, although retaining strong Christian views, and was eventually again reconciled with the Adventists in his final years. Roberts started his first health practice in the 1920s, and by the 1930s he was riding the natural health boom and founded the F.G. Roberts' Health Academy and the F.G. Roberts' Health Service to manage and promote his many new business interests. At its height, he had Health Academies that served both as health food shops and naturopathic clinics in Melbourne, Ballarat, Geelong, Sydney, Newcastle, Adelaide, Perth, Brisbane, Toowoomba, Maryborough, Bundaberg, Mackay, Ipswich and Rockhampton. He also founded his own societies including the Natural Health Organisation, which held meetings wherever he had shops or clinics, and conducted social activities such as picnics, sporting activities and holiday camps, and the Natural Health Society of Australasia. This latter organisation supported vegetarianism and published a book by an S. U. Elliott entitled *Healthful Eating* (1932) which stressed the benefits of fruits and nuts and the harm done by meat. Elliott was a convinced vegetarian who stated:

“Personally I have no desire whatever for flesh foods, realising that the years of suffering and ill health which I experienced, were largely caused by their use.”

Roberts also actively promoted a vegetarian diet but, as with many other dietary writers, he did not totally proscribe meat so as not to alienate his more die-hard meat-eating readers, saying, “I would appeal to my readers to make flesh foods the least prominent article of their diet; and where they are used, to balance them with abundance of fresh vegetables.”

He published a number of books including *Health via nature : healing with food* and *The natural health cook book and compilation of special diets : containing approximately 300 meatless recipes*. Many of his recipes entailed the use of soya-based products. To make the ingredients available to his readers in 1932 he opened a factory in St Kilda, Melbourne, which produced a range of health foods and supplements. In competition with Sanitarium he also produced various nut-based meat substitutes and in 1936 the first Australian soy products. In 1954, Soy Products

Pty bought out this business, but the company is still today selling soy and gluten free products under the F.G. Roberts name and logo.



Image courtesy of Soy Products (Sales) Pty Ltd, Bayswater, Victoria

After selling his business Roberts continued with his health work, founding and directing the Chiropractic and Osteopathic College of Australasia until the 1970s.

Roberts' long running journal *Natures Path to Health* was also another means to advertise the vegetarian diet and Roberts' businesses. Featuring articles on diet, health and natural remedies it was also generously blessed with a large number of photographs of semi-clad women and overly muscular men supposedly to show the benefits of his healthy regime.

When the Vegetarian Society re-founded in 1948, Roberts also lent his support, his Health Institutes in Perth and Melbourne both becoming headquarters for branches in their respective states.

One of Roberts' most notable protégés was Maurice Blackmore (1906-1977), who founded the giant Australian vitamin and supplement manufacturer Blackmores. Blackmore got his start with his employment at Roberts' Rockhampton health institute before moving on to Brisbane and founding his own business. Unlike Roberts however, Blackmore was not a vegetarian. He called himself a "half vegetarian" as even though he admitted, "vegetarians have a pretty strong argument"<sup>8</sup> he could not apparently bring himself to give up fish.

Another natural health publicist was Herbert Sutcliffe (1886-1971), a British migrant with an interest in psychology whose mentor on dietary and spiritual matters was the American, Phoebe Marie Holmes. (Holmes also believed that she had visited heaven which, she maintained, was located within our supposedly hollow sun!) Sutcliffe edited a very popular journal called *Radiant Health Messenger* (1930-1954), while Holmes' books (such as *Glorious Radiant Health*) were so

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<sup>8</sup> Blackmore, Maurice, *Food remedies : living naturally with Blackmores*, Bawgolah, Blackmores, 196?, p.12

successful that they were reprinted many times in Australia during the 1930s and 40s. The success of the radiant health theories allowed Sutcliffe to open a chain of Radiant Health Clubs, first in America and later in Australia and New Zealand (where he eventually settled).

Sutcliffe believed “individual health and happiness could be achieved by changing diet, physical habits, attitudes and spiritual awareness, and by following the laws of nature.” To achieve this state of happiness he promulgated a set of activities, which included a ‘mental diet’ - consisting of a set of affirmations such as ‘Thank God I am alive. I harmonise myself with the foods that cleanse and heal the body. I fill my mind with life, love and power’ - combined with exercise routines and a vegetarian diet.<sup>9</sup>

The Honorary Director of Dietetics for the Radiant Health Clubs was the dietician and writer Lawrence Armstrong. He wrote extensively on diet and its effect on health for varied publications including the *Radiant Health Messenger* and *Turner's Magazine*, promoting what he called the rational or natural diet, which were the two main euphemisms he used for vegetarianism.

Armstrong originally from Sydney moved to Perth and established his own Armstrong Health Institute in St Georges Terrace. From here, he saw patients and ran his own health supplement business using his formulated supplements and those he imported from the United States. His most popular supplements were his range of Bio-Vita food concentrates, which he claimed, could "banish all nervous disorders and depression" as well as cure "nervous sex gland disorders".

Between 1935 and 1945, he published a stream of pamphlets and small books on his theories of the dietary way to health. Some were simple vegetarian recipe books; others were on topics such as cancer, pregnancy and childbirth. In all of the works he strongly and primarily promoted a vegetarian diet as the sure means to fight any illness and frequently attacked meat eating as causing stress on the glands. Glands, it seems, were the crux of health to Armstrong so much so that he devoted a whole book to them (*Our mysterious glands*, 1937). In a couple of his works he did offer some consolation to meat eaters however, saying that those who were healthy adults

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<sup>9</sup> Stace, Hilary, Sutcliffe, Herbert 1886 – 1971, Dictionary of New Zealand Biography, updated 31 July 2003 URL: <http://www.dnzb.govt.nz/> and

Stace, H. Radiant Living , 1999. URL: <http://www.nzhistory.net.nz>

with 'strong glands' could eat some meat and fish, for children though he always said that meat and fish should never be given.<sup>10</sup>

Also writing a number of vegetarian recipe books during the 1930s and 1940s was Mary L. Nicholls, who ran the Australian section of Radiant Health Clubs from her base in Adelaide until well into the 1950s. Nicholls compiled and published amongst others *Radiant health recipes: the open road to health*, which went through many editions.

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<sup>10</sup> See any of the numerous titles published by Armstrong including: *Life force recipes* (1937), *Our heritage of health* (1935), *In harmony with nature* (1944)