

L & A - E. J. Whitehead

22-F-3

February 27, 1935

Sunset Seed Co.,
Royal Oak, B. C. Canada

Dear Brother

Yesterday Elder White handed me your letter to him written February 18, with the request that I send you a statement prepared by him some little time ago answering the questions you ask regarding Mrs. White making Flesh-Meat an article of diet. Here is his statement:

"Regarding Sister White's use of meat, I am very familiar with her practices and teachings. The instruction given to her in 1863 pointing out the disadvantage and the dangers of a meat diet, came as a great surprise to her and her abandonment of meat was a gradual process. At the end of ~~three or four~~ ^{one} years meat was almost never seen on her table, but for a time there was a meat soup served about once a week. Sister White and her family worked steadily away from the use of meat, but we had many set-backs.

"Sister White was not a cook, nor was she a food expert in the technical ways which come from study and experimentation. Often she had serious arguments with her cook. She was not always able to keep the cook which she had carefully indoctrinated into the vegetarian ideas. Those she employed were always intelligent young people. As they would marry and leave her, she was obliged to get new cooks who were untrained in vegetarian cookery. In those days we had no schools as we have no where our young ladies could learn the system of vegetarian cookery. Therefore, mother was obliged with all her other cares and duties to spend considerable effort in persuading her cooks that they could do without meat, or soda, and baking-powder and other things condemned in her testimonies. Oftentimes our table showed some compromises between the standard which Sister White was aiming at and the knowledge and experience and standard of the new cook.

"We were many years vegetarians before the conviction settled upon us that we should be teetotalers. Therefore, from time to time in her journeyings from place to place, our lunch basket contained some chicken, or turkey or tinned tongue. Our well educated cooks of today will say that this is quite unnecessary, but we must never forget that it was some time after this before we had any large numbers of well educated scientific vegetarian cooks.

"It was in 1894 that Sister White decided to be a teetotaler and shortly after that my wife and I decided to join her in this. We have been very faithful and true to our resolutions and have enjoyed very much our experience as teetotalers.

"In the earlier days of our health reform experience, people would urge that they must have a little meat, or their health would be ruined. When they quoted their experience or the doctor's counsel, mother would say that if they felt that they must have some meat to preserve their health, it was better to use it than to feel that they were ruining their health by total abstinence. But in later years, after our people at the sanitariums and elsewhere had made a study of the vegetarian diet, and had developed a knowledge of how to provide all that was essential without flesh meats, then mother became a total abstainer, and advised others to let it alone, even when they plead that they regarded it essential to their health.

"I remember distinctly, on one occasion when a physician in charge of our work at an important center, urged that his wife, who was suffering from pernicious anemia, must have meat to maintain her strength mother stated in her answer to him that in many cases where it was urged that meat was necessary to meet certain unfavorable conditions, the truth was that meat was creating those unfavorable conditions; and it was only a few months after that statement that one of our medical journals brought out an article from a very eminent authority stating that meat eating was not a cure for pernicious anemia, but was one of the causes of it.

"Sister White was steadfast, but not fanatical. She exercised forbearance toward those living where a vegetarian diet was not obtainable. She knew that our people who go to foreign lands have many strange experiences. In the higher Andes it is almost impossible to get a liveable diet without meat. In some of our northern countries it is almost impossible to get a liveable diet without fish and in other lands there are particular circumstances surrounding our workers which lead them to feel that the health risk of eating some meat which may have in it some poison elements is less than the health risk of doing without it. She encouraged our people to refrain from being judges of people who are working under unusual circumstances."

I believe, Brother Wagner, that this statement from Elder Whit's pen answers nearly all of the questions raised in your letter. I notice you ask regarding the statement found in "Counsels on Health" page 133 where Sister White says she has been a faithful health reformer. This was made in 1909. You have doubtless observed from Elder White's statement that the acceptance of health reform was progressive. We find that the statement from which you quote the few sentences in "Counsels on Health" sets the matter forth very clearly.

You will be glad to know that Elder Wilcox, the editor of the Review has prepared a very fine series of articles on Health Reform which will soon appear in the Review. These deal with the subject from its various angles and I feel sure will be very helpful. I am enclosing a leaflet which gives counsel to one of our evangelists.

Sincerely your brother,



Secretary to W. C. White